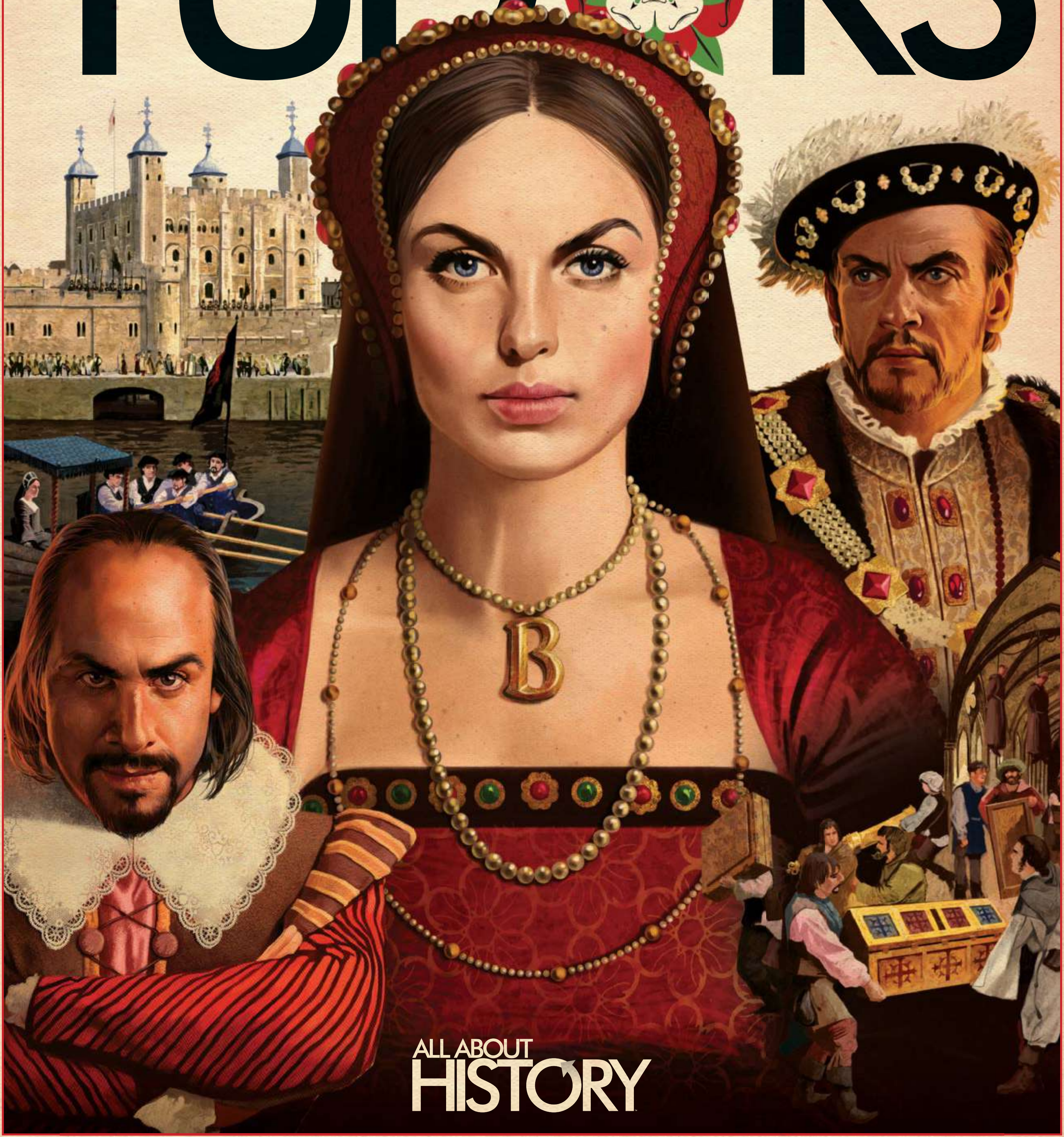
ALL ABOUT TUDORS

INSIDE ENGLAND'S MOST
INFAMOUS ROYAL FAMILY



ALL ABOUT
HISTORY

ALL ABOUT
TUDORS

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Few royal dynasties have attracted as much hype as the Tudors. Their's is a tale of murder, adultery, incest and scandal, and their reign changed the face of England forever. In this digital edition, we get inside the minds of its most famous players, to find out what really went down in the age of the Tudors.

Alicea Francis Deputy Editor

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WAR OF THE ROSES

In war, blood is power, blood is family, blood is everything. England's War of the Roses split a country in two and left the bones of its people scattered across its green and pleasant lands

Written by Robert Jones

It was 1453 and England was still at war with its old enemy France. Since the legendary days of King Henry V, the warrior king who spilled the blood of the noble enemy in spades at Agincourt and secured England's claim to the tactically important province of Normandy, both great western powers had been fighting nonstop, with England slowly but surely being pushed back toward the English Channel. English King Henry VI's military affairs were being overseen by the Duke of Somerset Edmund Beaufort, an experienced military commander who was about to suffer the ignobility of losing Bordeaux and leaving Calais as England's only remaining territory on the continent.

Back in England, Henry VI - shy, pious and noncombatant - was busy being dominated by his powerful and ruthless wife, Margaret of Anjou, the niece of the French King Charles VII, as well as his feuding court nobles, with Henry cow-towing to both and leaving the affairs of England and his estate in a paralysing limbo. Amid this turmoil, a year previously the Duke of York, Richard Plantagenet, had travelled to London with an army to present the court with a list of grievances that they and the king were failing to address. This potentially explosive situation had been handled by Margaret and with the news that she was now pregnant, it helped to re-isolate York and force him to leave the capital with his tail between his legs.

When King Henry VI was told of the final loss of Bordeaux he suffered a mental breakdown. Completely unaware of who he was, what was going on around him and how to act toward people, Henry finally let the last tentative grip of control he had over England slip through his fingers. No longer was Henry the softly spoken and pious king of old, but instead a dazed half-man, stumbling around his home and court, unable to speak cogently and liable to sudden bouts of hysteria and aggressive confusion.

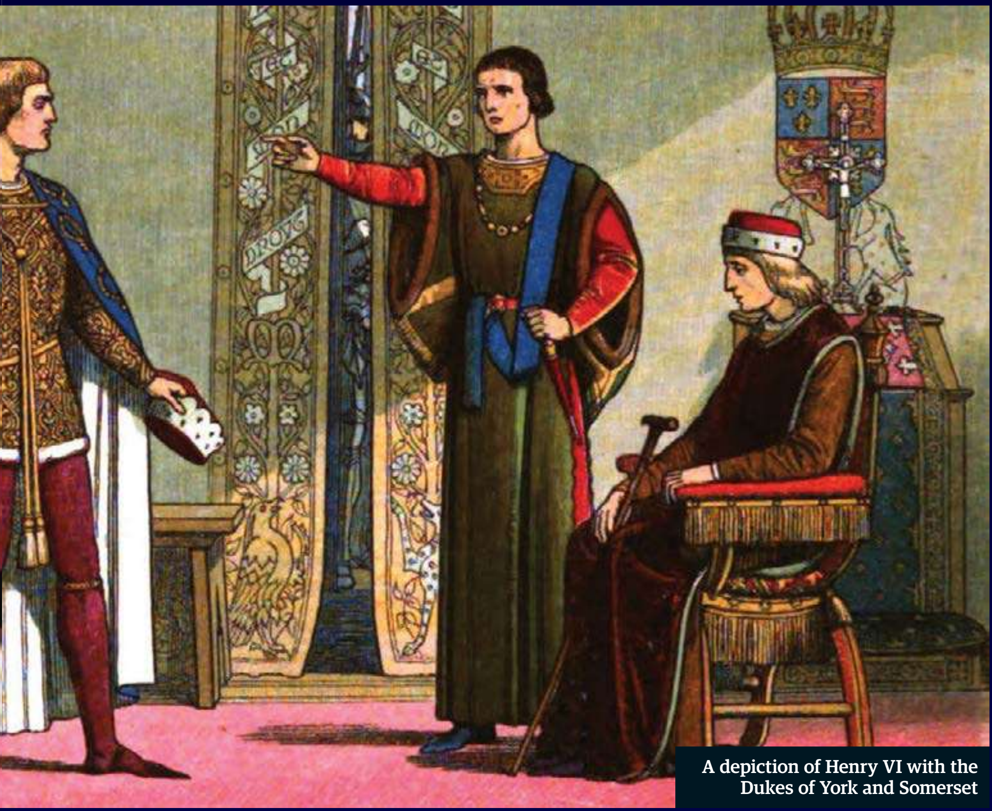
Henry's ethereal grasp on reality would go on to last an entire year. Margaret dealt with him as best she could, shielding him from the circling vultures at court and making all decisions regarding the rule of the nation for him. However, even she couldn't shield him from his own demons, with the king repeatedly heard screaming in the depths of night and continuously stricken with bouts of amnesia. When Margaret eventually gave birth to their son Edward, Henry's mental state was so deteriorated he didn't recognise him. Due to this incapacity, even his wilful and powerful wife Margaret was unable to stop the return of the Duke of York and his supporters, a group that now included Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, one of England's major financial and political powers. A Council of Regency was set up and power taken by Richard as Lord Protector of England. Once installed, he immediately imprisoned his old enemy, the Duke of Somerset, and backed all nobles opposing Henry, shifting the balance of court in his favour. The weak king had seemingly been deposed.

While the king was still alive – even if he was sometimes little more than a gibbering wreck – Richard's position was always perilous and when, on Christmas Day 1454, Henry suddenly and inexplicably regained his senses the balance of power in this game of thrones shifted yet again. The king had gone from not being able to recognise anyone, laughing maniacally on his own to the quiet and shy ruler of old almost overnight. With Henry now recovered, his queen lost no time in challenging York for the throne and quickly re-established Henry and herself at the centre of court. Never one to shy away from a confrontation – and well aware of the danger he presented – the queen began scheming to remove Richard from his reduced but still influential position, colluding with other nobles to discredit him and undermine his power and influence.

Margaret knew how to work the political system, which relied largely on the noble households. Richard soon found himself increasingly bypassed when it came to decisions, relegated away from London and, harried by Margaret at every turn, he found his allies slipping away. Finally, in early-1455, he decided that enough was enough and anticipating impending arrest for treason, raised an army and marched toward London. By the standards of the military might that was to come, this army of roughly 7,000 men may have been small, but there was nothing small in the statement that it made: the battle lines between the two great noble houses of England and their supporters had been drawn and the country held its breath, preparing to be plunged headfirst into chaos.

Richard Plantagenet was now not just contending for control at court but as the nation's king, and his loyal nobles gathered round him as the leader and figurehead of the House of York. Opposing him directly was Margaret of Anjou and her king, with the former now effectively the leader of the House of Lancaster. While the split in support for the two opposing sides wasn't just

"Completely unaware of who he was [...] Henry finally let the last tentative grip of control he had over England slip through his fingertips"



A depiction of Henry VI with the Dukes of York and Somerset

BATTLE FOR THE THRONE

The key players in the bloody quest for ultimate power

YORK

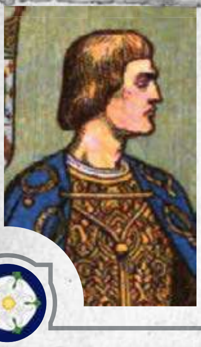
The second cadet branch of the parent House of Plantagenet, descended down the male line of the house from Edmund of Langley, the 1st Duke of York and the fourth surviving son of King Edward III. Three of its members down the ages became kings of the country. The house came to an end when Henry Tudor established the House of Tudor at the close of the Wars of the Roses.

Main supporters: Prince of Wales; Lord of Ireland; Dukes of York, Clarence, Gloucester.

Emblem: A white rose.

Claim to the throne: Richard Plantagenet was descended from King Edward III.

DUKE OF YORK



RICHARD PLANTAGENET

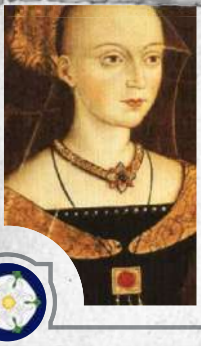
Date of birth: 21 September 1411

Strengths: Powerful and well connected; inherited large estates and influence in England and France.

Weaknesses: A series of military victories led him to overconfidence, ensuring his own death in a crushing defeat at the Battle of Wakefield.

POWER RATING: ●●●●○

QUEEN CONSORT



ELIZABETH WOODVILLE

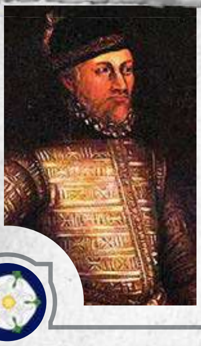
Date of birth: 1437

Strengths: Politically slick; married well above her station and was a renowned beauty

Weaknesses: Not powerful enough to hold the throne for her children; let her power be usurped by Lady Margaret Beaufort in later years.

POWER RATING: ●●●○○

EARL OF WARWICK



RICHARD NEVILLE

Date of birth: 22 November 1428

Strengths: A principal politician in England, he deposed two kings to earn the nickname 'the Kingmaker'.

Weaknesses: Let his dominant position at the English court be gradually eroded in later years due to directing his focus toward France.

POWER RATING: ●●●●●

LANCASTER

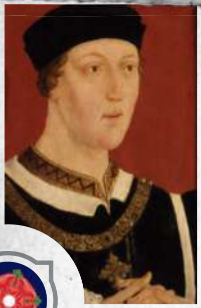
The first of two junior branches of the mighty royal House of Plantagenet, the House of Lancaster was created with the establishment of the Earldom of Lancaster by Henry III of England in 1267. From that date the House of Lancaster provided England with three kings, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI before becoming extinct with the execution of the latter's son, Edward Prince of Wales, by the rival House of York during the Wars of the Roses.

Main supporters: Earls of Lancaster, Leicester, Moray, Ferrers, Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln; Duke of Lancaster

Emblem: A red rose.

Claim to the throne: Its figurehead was Henry VI, the only son of Henry V.

KING OF ENGLAND



HENRY VI

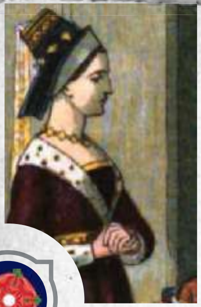
Date of birth: 6 December 1421

Strengths: Son of the powerful and popular Henry V; married well to Margaret of Anjou, was generally considered benevolent and pious.

Weaknesses: Bouts of crippling mental illness saw his kingdom ruled by others during his reign for extended periods of time.

POWER RATING: ●●○○○

QUEEN CONSORT



MARGARET OF ANJOU

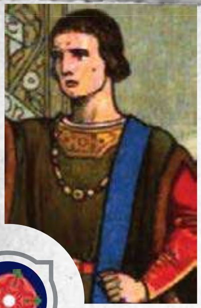
Date of birth: 23 March 1430

Strengths: Passionate, proud and strong-willed, Margaret provided the House of Lancaster the scheming and ruthless ruler Henry VI failed to be.

Weaknesses: Overstepped her power level in the Battle of Tewkesbury, leading to her ultimate fall from grace and power.

POWER RATING: ●●●●○

DUKE OF SOMERSET



EDMUND BEAUFORT

Date of birth: 1406

Strengths: Head of one of the most influential families in England. Experienced and respected by his peers.

Weaknesses: Poor temperament, lost more battles than he won; let a personal feud with the Duke of York get violently out of hand.

POWER RATING: ●●●○○

TWO HOUSES DIVIDED

Follow the family trees of two historic nobles' houses

HOUSE OF YORK

ANNE DE MORTIMER

1390-1411

The mother of Richard Plantagenet and grandmother of King Edward IV and King Richard III, Anne de Mortimer was descended from royalty through her mother and grandparents. She died of childbirth.

RICHARD OF CONISBURGH

1375-1415

The father of Richard Plantagenet and husband to Anne de Mortimer, Richard of Conisburgh was the 3rd Earl of Cambridge and a prominent figure in the Southampton Plot against Henry V. He was caught and executed.

RICHARD PLANTAGENET

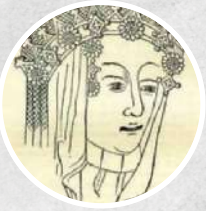
1411-1460

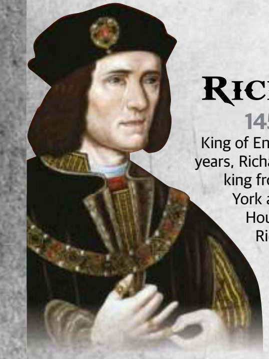
The son of Anne de Mortimer and Richard of Conisburgh, Richard of York became a key Yorkist leader during the early parts of the Wars of the Roses, winning numerous battles and even becoming Lord Protector for a time.

CECILY NEVILLE

1415-1495

The wife of Richard Plantagenet, Cecily Neville was the Duchess of York and was well known for her beauty and piety. She gave birth to two later kings of England, Edward IV and Richard III. She outlived her husband by 35 years.





RICHARD III

1452-1485

King of England for just two years, Richard III was the last king from the House of York and the last of the House of Plantagenet. Richard was famously defeated by Henry Tudor at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

EDWARD IV

1442-1483

The first Yorkist king of England, Edward IV ruled the country in two spells, from 1461 to 1470 and then after an overthrow and subsequent restoration, from 1471 to 1483. He was succeeded by his younger brother Richard III.

ELIZABETH WOODVILLE

1437-1492

Spouse of King Edward IV from 1464, Elizabeth Woodville was one of the most powerful women in England during the Wars of the Roses. She gave birth to the Princes in the Tower and Elizabeth of York, future wife of Henry Tudor, King Henry VII of England.

EDWARD V

1470-1483

One of the famous Princes in the Tower, Edward V was a son of Elizabeth Woodville and uncrowned king for just 86 days. He was succeeded infamously by his uncle and Lord Protector, Richard of Gloucester, later King Richard III of England.

RICHARD OF SHREWSBURY

1473-1483

The second son of Elizabeth Woodville and King Edward IV, Richard was the second famous member of the Princes in the Tower. Richard was almost certainly murdered along with Edward and disposed of in secret.

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

OWEN TUDOR

1385-1461

A Welsh soldier and courtier, Owen Tudor was descended from a Welsh prince, Rhys ap Gruffudd. After fighting at Agincourt he was awarded English rights and went on to serve in the household of Catherine of Valois after Henry V's death. They were possibly married in secret in 1429.

CATHERINE OF VALOIS

1401-1437

Queen consort of England from 1420 to 1422, Catherine of Valois was the daughter of Charles VI of France. She was married to Henry V in 1420. In December 1421, she gave birth to the future Henry VI. Later, after Henry V's death, she went on to form a relationship with Owen Tudor.

HENRY V

1386-1422

The famous warrior king of England who scored a famous victory over the French at the Battle of Agincourt, Henry V was the second English monarch to stem from the House of Lancaster after his father, King Henry IV.

HENRY VI

1421-1471

Henry VI was the third king from the House of Lancaster. He became king at just nine months old. He suffered from periods of madness throughout his life and was deposed by Edward IV and the House of York.

MARGARET OF ANJOU

1430-1482

The wife of Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou was the niece of Charles VII. Widely held to be responsible for the Wars of the Roses after excluding the Duke of York from the Great Council in 1455.

EDWARD OF LANCASTER

1453-1471

The only child of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou. After the battle of Towton he was exiled in France with his mother. He was killed in battle in Tewkesbury.

EDMUND TUDOR

1431-1456

Edmund Tudor was the first son of Owen Tudor and Catherine of Valois. Henry VI made him the Earl of Richmond in 1452. He married Margaret Beaufort in 1455.

MARGARET BEAUFORT

1443-1509

Margaret Beaufort was the daughter of the Duke of Somerset and the great-great granddaughter of King Edward III. She gave birth to the future Henry VII at just 13 years old.

ELIZABETH OF YORK

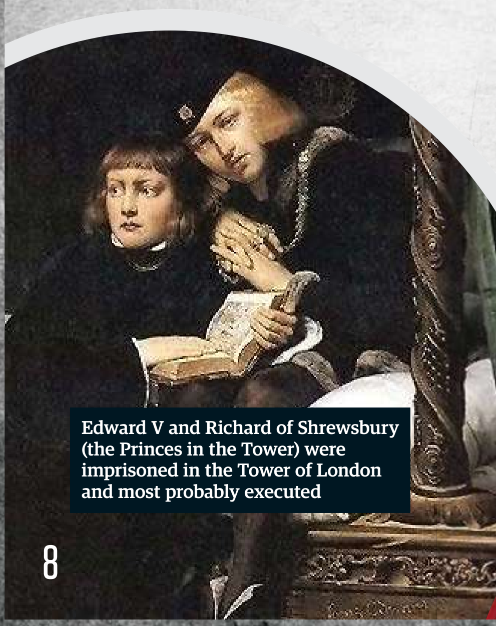
1466-1503

The only daughter of Elizabeth Woodville, Elizabeth of York played a key part in ending the Wars of the Roses, marrying the Lancastrian ally Henry Tudor on 18 January 1486, establishing the Tudor Dynasty.

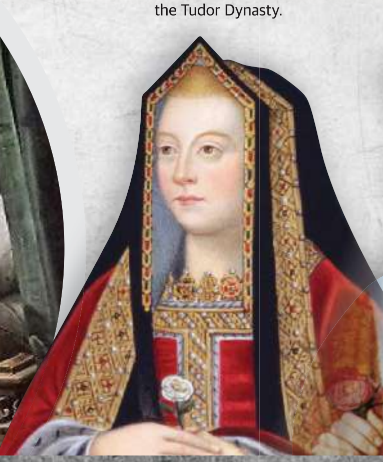
HENRY VII

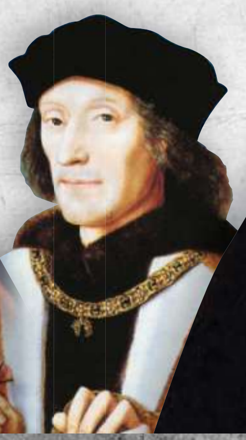
1457-1509

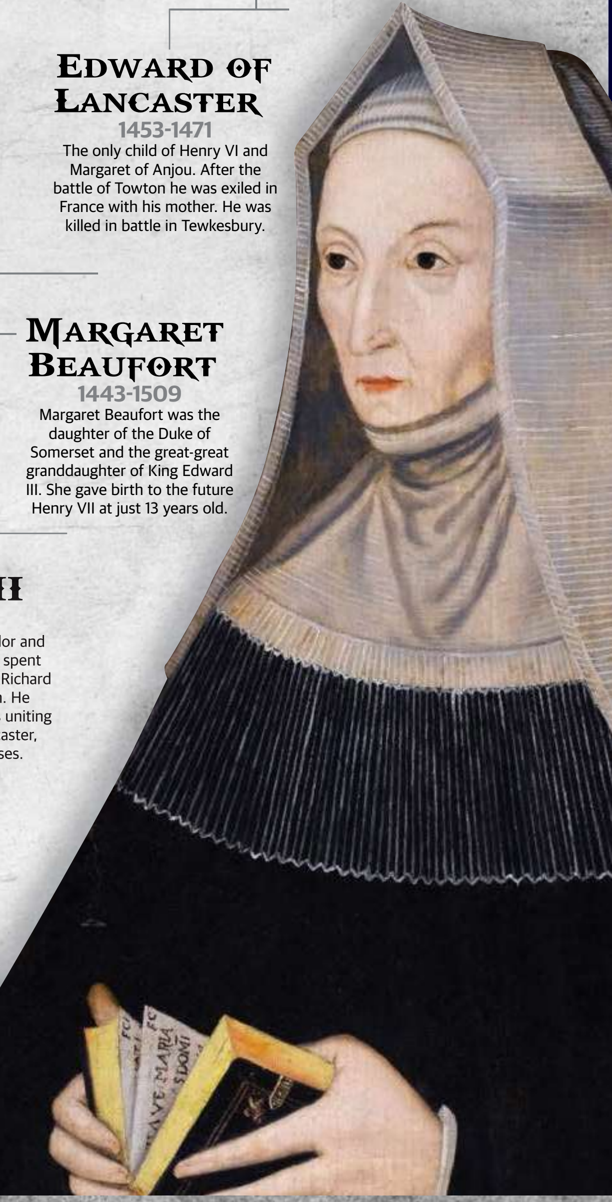
The only child of Edmund Tudor and Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII spent years in exile before defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. He married Elizabeth of York, thus uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster, ending the Wars of the Roses.

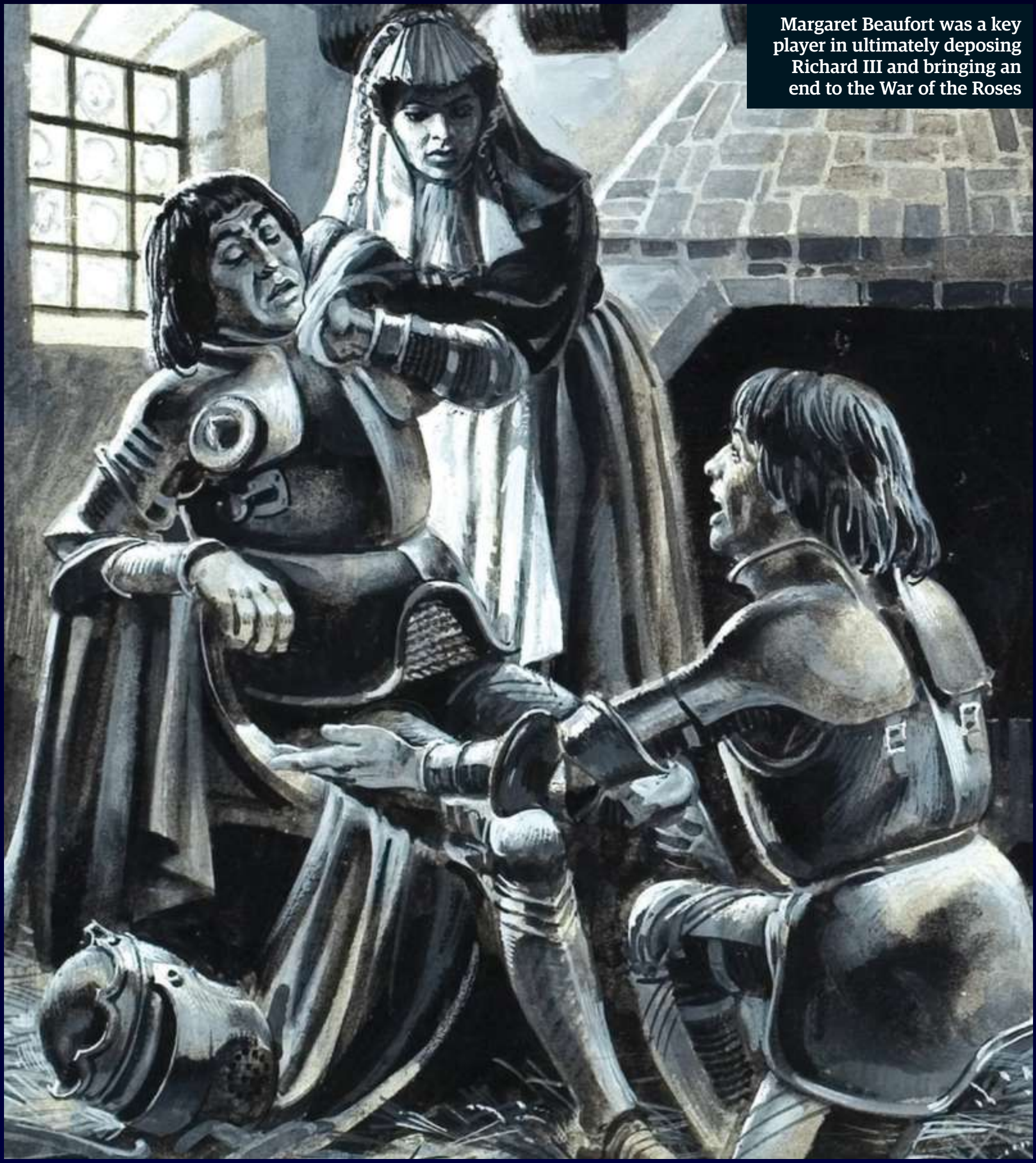


Edward V and Richard of Shrewsbury (the Princes in the Tower) were imprisoned in the Tower of London and most probably executed









Margaret Beaufort was a key player in ultimately deposing Richard III and bringing an end to the War of the Roses

decided by geography, with nobles from all parts of the country siding with one house or the other due to a series of complex and often long-standing allegiances, although with Richard marching down from the north where he had recruited much of his army, it seemed like the north was coming to claim what it believed was rightfully its property in the south. To many of the nobles supporting the House of York they were marching on the capital with their knights, infantrymen and archers to remove a weak king from power and restore order to a country on the verge of disintegration and collapse.

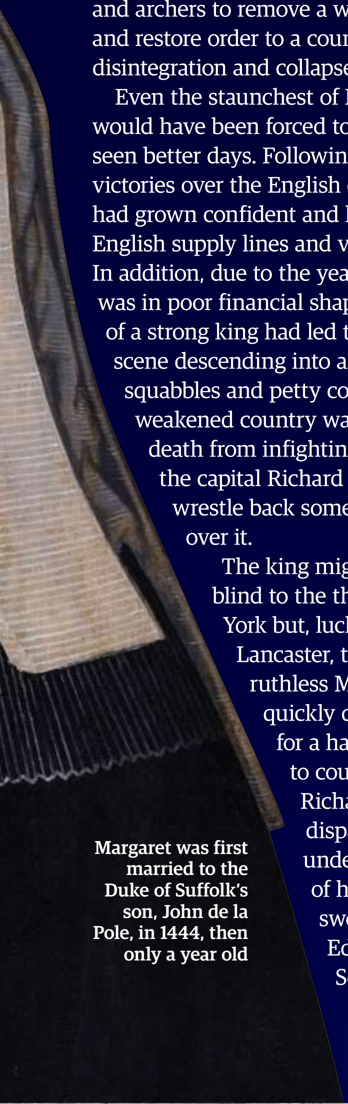
Even the staunchest of Henry VI's supporters would have been forced to admit the country had seen better days. Following a series of French victories over the English on the continent, they had grown confident and had begun raiding English supply lines and vessels in the Channel. In addition, due to the years of warfare England was in poor financial shape, while the absence of a strong king had led to London's political scene descending into a series of arguments, squabbles and petty confrontations. A weakened country was slowly bleeding to death from infighting, so in marching on the capital Richard Plantagenet intended to wrestle back some semblance of control over it.

The king might have been largely blind to the threat of the Duke of York but, luckily for the House of Lancaster, the ever-vigilant and ruthless Margaret was not. She quickly drummed up support for a hastily assembled army to counter the threat from Richard's forces. Margaret dispatched this army under the command of her favourite and a sworn enemy of Richard, Edmund, Duke of Somerset. The king was also sent along with the army and, judging by the comparatively small size of the Lancastrian army (roughly 2,000 men), it seemed Margaret expected that there would be no hostilities, with some sort of peace treaty the likely outcome and the status quo maintained. The beautiful and resourceful queen was wrong, though. Spectacularly so.

The two armies came together at St Albans just north of London on 22 May 1455, and after a couple of minor skirmishes, the first battle of the War of the Roses broke out. Richard's Yorkist force quickly cut down the Duke of Somerset as well as Lancastrian loyal nobles Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland and Lord Thomas Clifford. Turning a defeat into a catastrophe, Henry VI himself was also captured, personally apprehended by Richard's key ally Warwick's forces as he hid in a local tanner's shop, abandoned by his advisers and servants and seemingly suffering from yet another mental breakdown.

The following day, York and Warwick marched with the now-mad-again king in their custody to London. Redepositing the unfortunate Henry with Margaret, Richard retook the position of Lord Protector and he and Warwick began to re-establish themselves. An uneasy truce of sorts

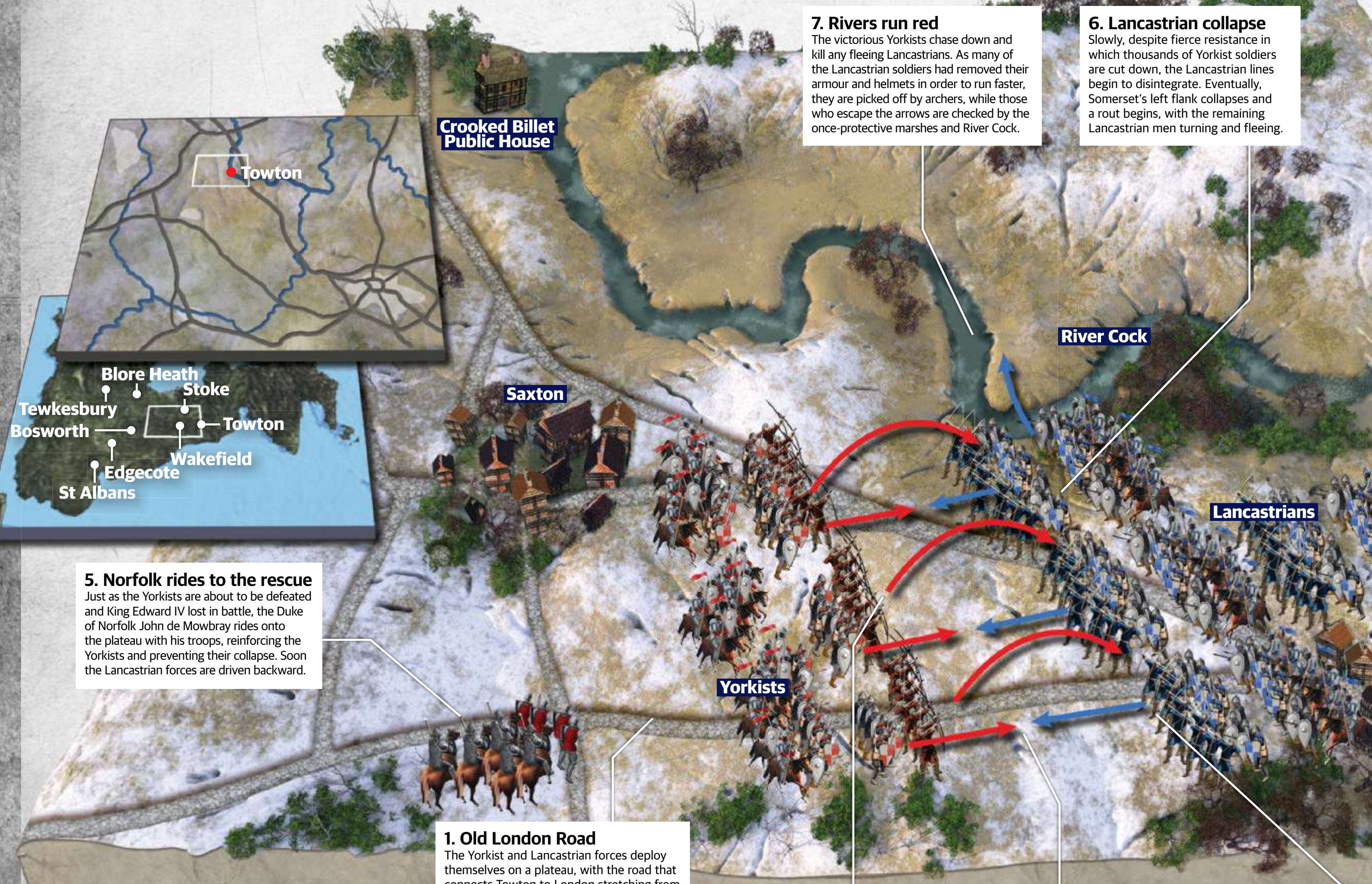
> "Richard Plantagenet was now not just a contender for control of England but also its kingship, as the leader and figurehead of the House of York"



Margaret was first married to the Duke of Suffolk's son, John de la Pole, in 1444, then only a year old

The bloodiest battle: Towton

Towton was not only the most brutal battle of the War of the Roses but also one of the most decisive. These are its climactic events:



1. Old London Road
The Yorkist and Lancastrian forces deploy themselves on a plateau, with the road that connects Towton to London stretching from north to south throughout the battlefield. The Lancastrian flanks are protected by marshes, while the Yorkist troops assemble on a ridge to the south.

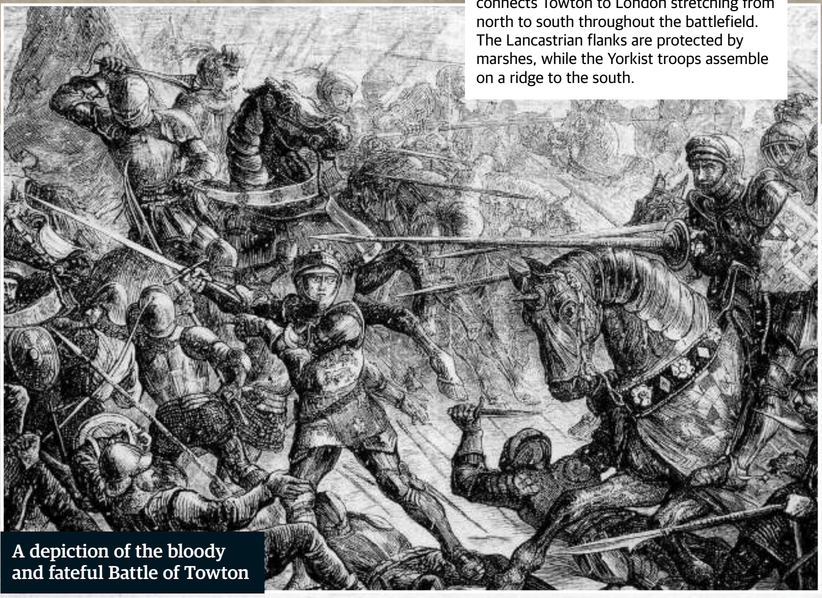
2. Opening barrage
As the Lancastrian forces of Henry Beaufort are in a sound defensive position, he gives the order to hold position. The first move of the battle is ordered by the Yorkist leader Lord Fauconberg, as their longbowmen to step forward and unleash a volley of arrows. The Lancastrians return their own volley, but the wind direction causes it to fall short.

4. Meat grinder
The two sides keep pushing into each other in a melee that continues for over three hours, with thousands of soldiers cut down, their bodies littering the battlefield. Gradually, the outnumbered Yorkist lines are overwhelmed, with the balance of power falling in Somerset's favour.

5. Norfolk rides to the rescue
Just as the Yorkists are about to be defeated and King Edward IV lost in battle, the Duke of Norfolk John de Mowbray rides onto the plateau with his troops, reinforcing the Yorkists and preventing their collapse. Soon the Lancastrian forces are driven backward.

6. Lancastrian collapse
Slowly, despite fierce resistance in which thousands of Yorkist soldiers are cut down, the Lancastrian lines begin to disintegrate. Eventually, Somerset's left flank collapses and a rout begins, with the remaining Lancastrian men turning and fleeing.

7. Rivers run red
The victorious Yorkists chase down and kill any fleeing Lancastrians. As many of the Lancastrian soldiers had removed their armour and helmets in order to run faster, they are picked off by archers, while those who escape the arrows are checked by the once-protective marshes and River Cock.


A depiction of the bloody and fateful Battle of Towton

> "Edward joined forces once more with his father's old ally, 'the Kingmaker' Warwick, and rode forth toward the north armed with a deadly army of over 30,000 men"

8. Henry flees
Somerset as well as a few other surviving Lancastrian nobles manage to escape the battlefield and news of the defeat is sent to Henry VI. He flees straight away to Scotland with his wife Margaret of Anjou where he is joined by Somerset.

3. Lancastrian charge
Under assault by Yorkist arrows, Somerset orders his troops to charge up the hill. Advancing through a rain of arrows, the Lancastrians lose many men, but reach the Yorkist lines and engage them in melee combat, cutting down hundreds of soldiers.

LANCASTER

Troops: 35,000
Losses: Unknown
(Total dead across both armies: 28,000)

Leader: Henry VI
Strengths: Strong claim to the throne of England, being the only child to King Henry V.
Weaknesses: Periods of debilitating insanity. Also quiet, shy and unsuited to warfare.

Key supporter:
Duke of Somerset
Strengths: Experienced military commander with steady judgement.
Weaknesses: Political amateur; had a habit for switching sides.

Secondary unit:
Footsoldier
Strengths: Numerous and gritty fighters when on the battlefield.
Weaknesses: Not always well trained or equipped enough.

YORK

Troops: 30,000
Losses: Unknown
(Total dead across both armies: 28,000)

Leader: Edward IV of England
Strengths: Extremely capable and daring military leader. Good fighter on the battlefield.
Weaknesses: Poor foresight and inconsistent political judgement.

Key supporter:
Lord Fauconberg
Strengths: Established military commander and knight. Politically savvy.
Weaknesses: Disloyal and mercenary.

Secondary unit:
Longbowmen
Strengths: Fabulous range and stopping power with armour-piercing arrows.
Weaknesses: Vulnerable in melee combat and ineffective in poor visibility conditions.

followed, with both sides plotting to overthrow the other but failing to act decisively. Warwick became captain of Calais - an important and powerful position - but once again Henry VI recovered his mental strength and took his royal progress (a tour) into the Midlands in 1456, establishing his court in Coventry. By this point, the country effectively had two different kings, an unsustainable state of affairs. In this court, the third Duke of Somerset, Henry Beaufort was emerging as the favourite, with plans struck by him and Margaret to roll back all the appointments York had made while Lord Protector and to degrade Warwick's influence on state affairs. The situation was balancing on a knife's edge; one sudden move, one perceived threat, and the whole country would rapidly descend into all-out civil war.

It took three years, but that the peace would end was as inevitable as the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. The move that would shatter the precarious peace came in 1459, when York and Warwick were summoned to a royal council in Coventry by Henry VI and Margaret and, fearing foul play and a potential threat to their lives, refused to go, instead grouping together with their supporters at Ludlow Castle. This was the starting pistol for the beginning of the bloodiest civil war England had ever seen. The Battle of Blore Heath was first, then the Battle of Ludford Bridge, followed by the Battle of Northampton and Wakefield. Each new bloody confrontation saw thousands of men smash into each other, each thrust with a dagger or a sword that hit home a blow to the heart of the House of Lancaster or York. The balance of power shifted

THE MANY WARS OF THE ROSES

30 years of conflict mapped out on a bloody land

St Albans 22 May 1455
St Albans saw Richard of York lead a force of over 3,000 soldiers on a direct course for London to take down Henry VI. Henry rode out to meet the Yorkist army and took up a defensive position at St Albans. Richard attacked the city with a great fury and defeated Henry. Queen Margaret and her young son Edward were forced into exile.

Blore Heath
23 September 1459
Despite scoring a victory at St Albans, Richard's advance to London was halted. The Wars of the Roses rekindled themselves four years later when Richard, fearing his campaign was losing momentum, decided to centralise his forces around the town of Ludlow and launch a massive assault on the Lancastrians. Queen Margaret heard of the movement and dispatched her loyal Lord Audley to intercept. Despite Audley having roughly twice as many soldiers, he lost the battle and his life.

Wakefield 30 December 1460
With a large countering army assembled by the Lancastrians near the city of York, Richard took his forces north along with Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury to intercept. Richard took a defensive position at Sandal Castle due to Lancastrians sporting a force close to 20,000, while his own forces numbered only around 10,000. Despite taking Sandal however, Richard decided to ride out and meet the Lancastrian forces directly. He was eventually overwhelmed and killed in battle. Richard Neville and Richard's son are executed.

Towton 29 March 1461
A vast Yorkist force numbering 30,000 men fought the elements and a 35,000-strong force of Lancastrians at Towton. After hours of bloody fighting the Duke of Norfolk arrived with reinforcements at the last moment and the Yorkists won the day.

Edgecote Moor 26 July 1469
Eight years on from the bloody battle of Towton, in which Edward IV had ruled unopposed, an army sent to put down an uprising was attacked by Lancastrian forces and quickly defeated, with the Earls of Pembroke and Devon killed.

Tewkesbury 4 May 1471
The Lancastrian forces of the 4th Duke of Somerset, Edmund Beaufort, plotted a course for Wales. King Edward IV heard of the move and sent an army to intercept. The two sides met at Tewkesbury and, after Somerset attempted a failed break of the Yorkist lines and was countered, the Lancastrian force was routed, the Prince of Wales killed in battle, Somerset executed and Queen Margaret of Anjou captured.

Bosworth 22 August 1485
Richard III had succeeded Edward IV as king. Henry Tudor had other ideas and landed in Wales on 7 August 1485 to take the crown. Richard heard of the invasion and moved to intercept Henry, the two forces eventually meeting south of Bosworth. During the ensuing battle Lord Thomas Stanley and Sir William Stanley switched sides from the Yorkists to the Lancastrians. As a result, Richard III was killed and Henry became King Henry VII.

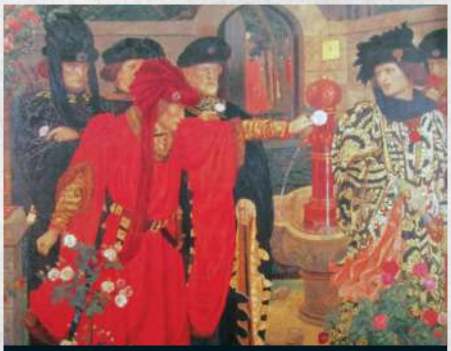
Stoke 16 June 1487
The last battle of the War of the Roses, Stoke was a final, wild roll of the dice for the remaining Yorkist forces. Bolstered by German and Irish mercenaries, Yorkist troops started to march toward London, but were met at East Stoke and obliterated. Its leaders were captured and imprisoned, its men killed and the last remnants of the Yorkist faction destroyed.

The War of the Roses pitted Yorkists against Lancastrians for over three decades

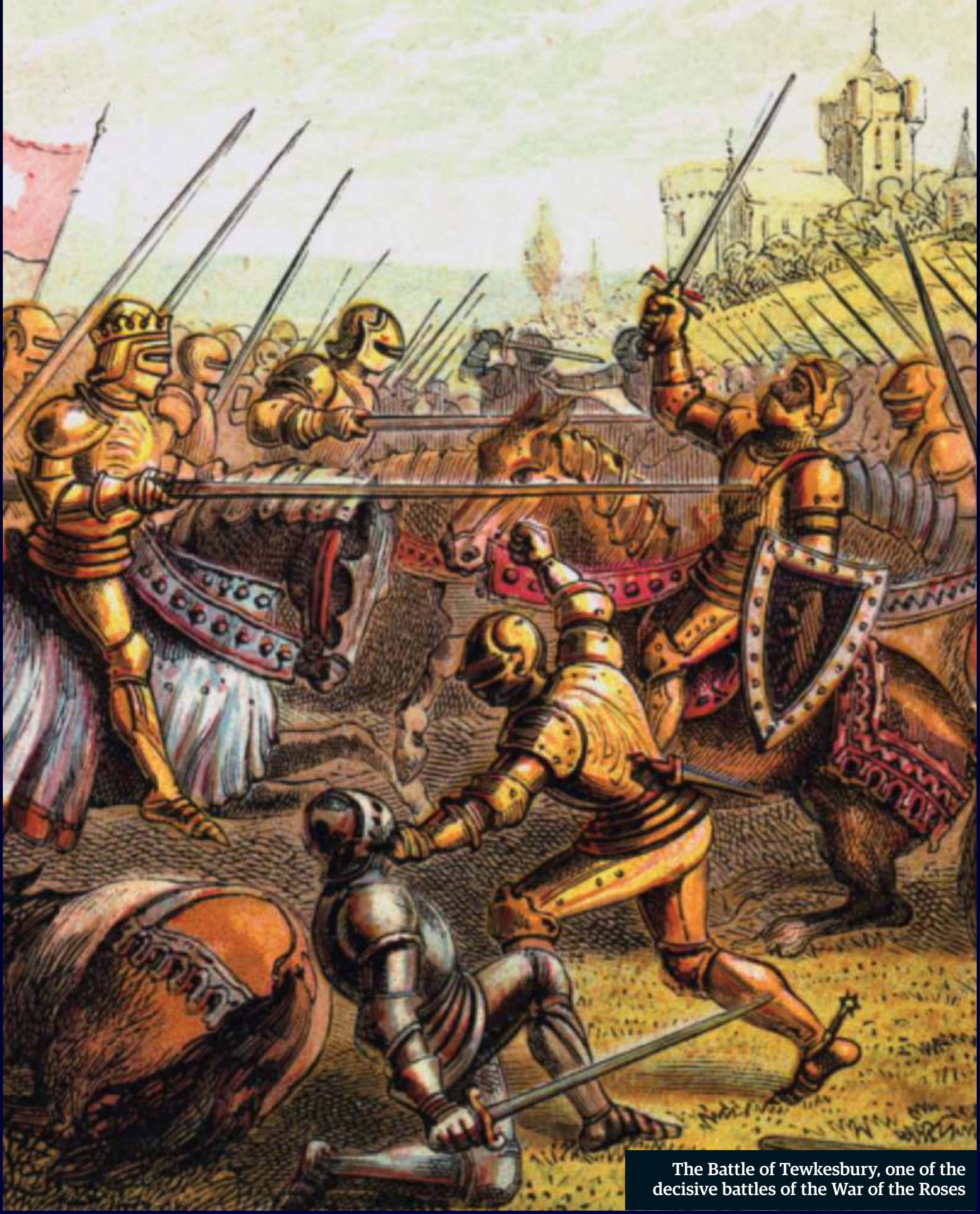
WAR OF THE ROSES IN POPULAR CULTURE

How has literature and film portrayed the events?

One of our main sources for information in popular culture on the War of the Roses is William Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy, which charts the political machinations, fights and jealousies that tore the English political system apart in the mid-15th century. Indeed, the current name for the series of battles – War of the Roses – actually stems from Act 2, Scene 4 of the work, where the bickering lords are asked to show their allegiance to either Richard Duke of York or the rival Duke of Somerset by selecting either a red or white rose from a garden. This scene, despite its dubious historical accuracy – historians think it never took place – was later seized on Sir Walter Scott and popularised through his work *Anne of Geierstein*. The name, 'Wars of the Roses', therefore stuck and has proceeded to be used to describe the conflict since. Up until this point, the conflict had instead simply been referred to as the 'civil war'.



The historically apocryphal scene from Shakespeare's *Henry VI* where supporters of the Yorkists and Lancastrians pick either a red or white rose to show their allegiance



The Battle of Tewkesbury, one of the decisive battles of the War of the Roses

fluidly from one house to the other, but sometimes into nothingness, with no real victor or controlling stake identifiable.

These battles didn't just see commoners cut down in their thousands; for Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York, Wakefield would be his final resting place. Decades of warfare had finally caught up with him. With Richard slain in battle and his second son Edmund and ally Richard of Salisbury captured and executed, Wakefield was one of the largest Lancastrian victories of the War of the Roses and a boon for the ageing but powerful Margaret of Anjou. Following Wakefield, the House of Lancaster pressed on, with their army returning south, outmanoeuvring Warwick's Yorkist army and defeating them at the Second Battle of St Albans. By now, all seemed to be lost for the House of York.

With Richard Plantagenet dead and the Earl of Warwick having suffered a bad defeat, the House of York desperately needed a figurehead to rally around and so Richard's first son, Edward of March, stepped into the breach. He had already defeated Jasper Tudor's Lancastrian army at the Battle of Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire and, hearing of Warwick's defeat, joined his father's ally. The two of them and their armies then made a beeline for the capital. Margaret and Henry VI were not in London, as they were travelling northward, so the Yorkists entered the city unopposed and to a rapturous welcome. The welcome was so enthusiastic because Henry VI's incompetence as king had seen popular opinion sway in Edward's favour and the common people had seemingly had enough of being under Lancastrian ruler.

Such was the anti-Lancastrian mood that not only did Edward receive huge support from all the Yorkist nobles around the city but he was unofficially crowned king in an impromptu ceremony held at Westminster Abbey. Edward knew though that while he had enjoyed the ceremony, he would never truly be king until Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou had been disposed of. Vowing to Parliament that he would

> "Importantly though, while Margaret and the House of Lancaster were down for the count, they were not down and out"

not have a formal coronation until all pretenders to the throne had been crushed, he joined forces once more with his father's old ally, the 'Kingmaker', Warwick. Together they rode forth toward the north, leading a deadly army of over 30,000 men; their mission to take a proverbial hammer to the House of Lancaster and cut the head off its talisman.

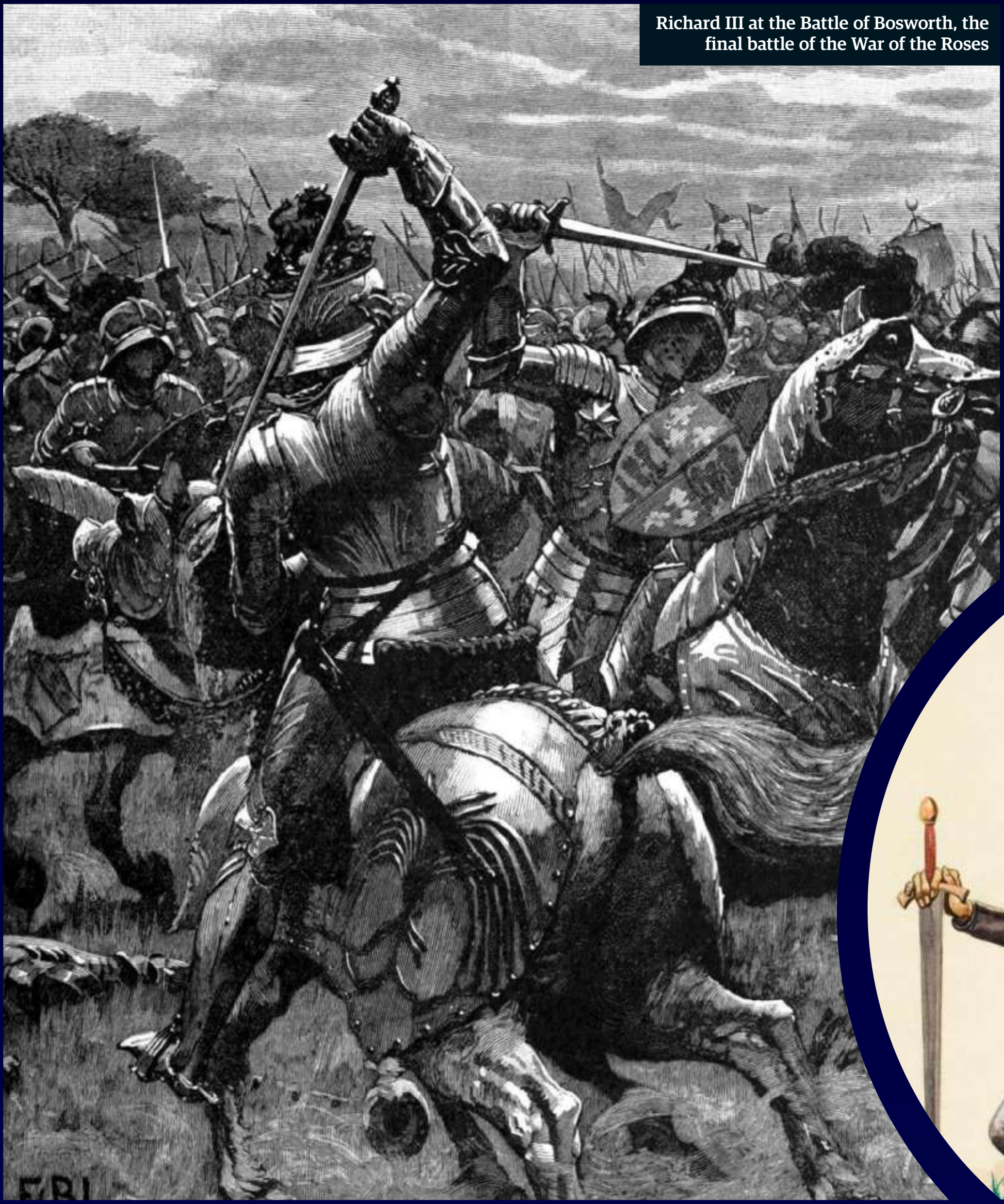
This already large army grew even more along the way, with more men and nobles drawn to Edward's cause as he marched toward Henry VI and Margaret, as he headed straight toward what was to be one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles in the entirety of the War of the Roses. Edward and his army was finally met by the House of Lancaster's great military commander Henry Beaufort, third Duke of Somerset, south of York at the village of Towton. Margaret had dispatched Somerset to put down the son of her old nemesis Richard Plantagenet once and for all. Beaufort turned up to the killing fields of Towton with an army of 35,000 soldiers just as the snow began to fall from the sky and settle on the ground.

When the screams and the drums of war had died away, but the blood still startlingly vivid against the white snow, England had a new king. The House of York had emerged triumphant and Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou had been forced to flee to Scotland. Edward was officially crowned the new king of England in June the same year and slowly, one by one, the remaining pockets of Lancastrian soldiers were hunted down, either killed or forced to leave England. Margaret orchestrated an attack on Carlisle later that year but due to lack of financial power and men at arms, her advance was repulsed by Edward's Yorkist forces. Her loyal Duke of Somerset was later defeated and executed at the Battle of Hexham and her husband, Henry VI was captured and imprisoned yet again. This time he was held at the notorious Tower of London.

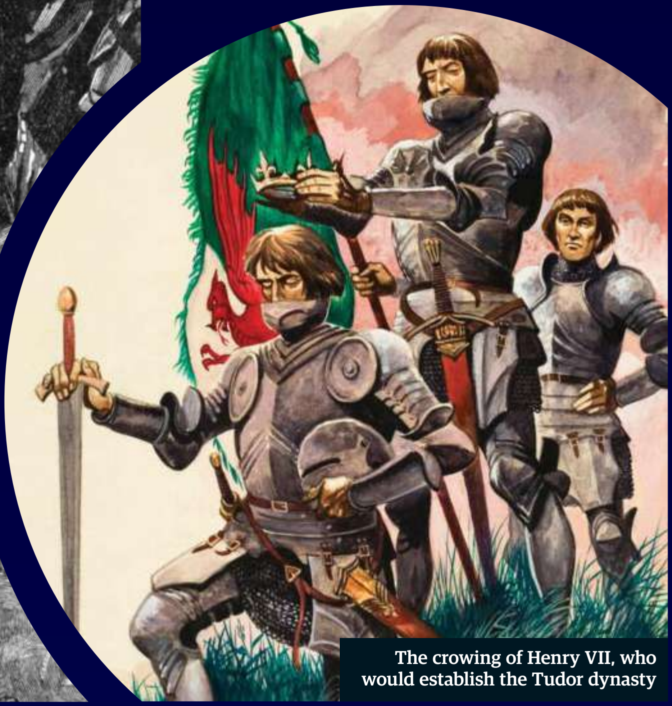
Bankrupt and no longer in command of any military support, Margaret had only one option left open to her – to return to France with her son. Setting sail from Scotland in mid-1465, Margaret of Anjou, once queen of England and leader of the House of Lancaster, was down for the count. Her position in England lay in ruin and her dream to see her son Edward of Lancaster crowned king was crushed. Importantly though, while Margaret and the House of Lancaster were down for the count, they were not down and out.

The following years of exile did nothing to dampen Margaret's ambitions as she would continue her plotting and scheming to take back the English throne like never before. In an audacious political move, she struck a deal with her former enemy, 'the Kingmaker' Earl of Warwick in an attempt to re-establish her previous control of England. While her husband Henry VI would lose his life in the Tower of London and Yorkist Edward IV would go on to be king along with his younger brother Richard III, by the time the fighting ceased in the climactic Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 and the curtain on the War of the Roses was brought down, it was the Henry Tudor who would win the game of thrones and become king of England.

The story of Henry Tudor's rise to the kingship of England, 20 years after Margaret's exile, and his subsequent founding of the historic Tudor dynasty is a story for another day. Tudor's meteoric elevation dominated the last years of the Wars of the Roses and his ultimate victory was far from a certainty, with history painting a tale more at home with the concepts of luck and chance rather than those of divine right and might. For that was, in the end, the real truism of England's War of the Roses – that all is fair in love and war and that blood is everything.



Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth, the final battle of the War of the Roses



The crowing of Henry VII, who would establish the Tudor dynasty

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

ENGLAND'S GAME OF THRONES

Follow our comprehensive timeline of the key events that decided the outcome in the Wars of the Roses

Henry VI is born

The son of warrior king Henry V and Catherine de Valois, Henry VI was crowned king of both England and France during infancy. He would proceed to oversee England's final losses in the Hundred Years' War and famously married the strong and powerful Margaret of Anjou.

6 December 1421

The Kingmaker

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick was one of the most powerful figures in the entire war, personally overseeing the deposition of two kings is born. He was killed at the Battle of Barnet.

22 November 1428

Margaret of Anjou is born

One of the key players in the Wars of the Roses, Margaret of Anjou, the future wife of King Henry VI, is born to René d'Anjou, Duke of Anjou and Isabel de Lorraine.

23 March 1430

Jasper Tudor is born

Son of legendary Welsh warrior Owen Tudor, who fought alongside Henry V at Agincourt, he would become a commander and play an important role in establishing Henry Tudor as king.

1431

The end of Somerset

The final battle of the experienced Lancastrian commander, the Duke of Somerset, Hexham saw a large Yorkist victory and Somerset's capture and execution.

15 May 1464

Elizabeth of York is born

Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV's only daughter to be born, Elizabeth of York would proceed to be queen consort of England under Henry VII. She is the Yorkist partner in the eventual joining of houses at the end of the Wars of the Roses.

11 February 1466

The Battle of Edgecote Moor

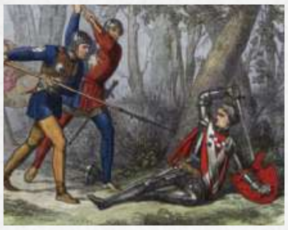
After raising an army to put down an uprising in Yorkshire, King Edward IV's forces are intercepted by a Lancastrian one and defeated by Robin of Redesdale.

26 July 1469

Battle of Losecote Field

Edward IV raises a new army and attacks Lancastrian troops at Empingham, winning well.

12 March 1470



Henry VI is restored to the throne

After been alienated and shunned by his old ally Edward IV, the Earl of Warwick strikes a deal with Margaret of Anjou to defeat the Yorkist king. 'The Kingmaker' restores Henry VI to the throne.

30 October 1470

The Kingmaker exits

The final curtain for 'the Kingmaker', Barnet sees Warwick die at the hand of Yorkist forces of Edward IV.

14 April 1471

Battle of Tewkesbury

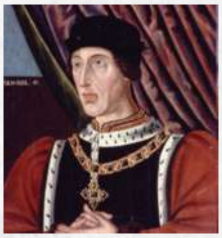
Notable for the death of Margaret of Anjou's only son Edward and her own capture.

4 May 1471

Henry VI dies

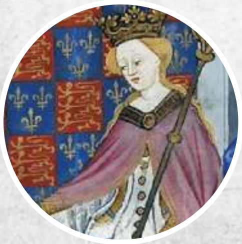
After a period of incarceration in the Tower of London, it is reported that Henry VI has died. Edward VI is suspected to have ordered his death mere hours before he himself was re-crowned as king.

21 May 1471



Margaret of Anjou is finally defeated 1475

After spending most of her life caring for her son Edward in an attempt to ensure his succession to the throne of England, his death at the Battle of Tewkesbury is the final blow to the once-powerful queen. With her spirit broken she is exiled back to France, where she spends the remainder of her life living as a poor relation of the French king.



Edward IV dies at 40

After over a decade of successful rule as the king of England in two spells, Edward IV dies suddenly and unexpectedly, throwing the country back into political turmoil. His heir, Edward V, is only 12 years old at the time of his father's death.

9 April 1483

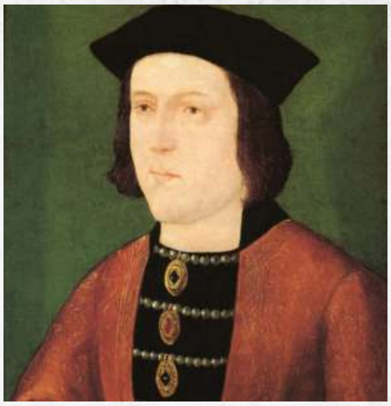
The Princes in the Tower die 1483

The only two sons alive at the time of their father's death Edward IV, Edward V of England and Richard of Shrewsbury are famously incarcerated in the Tower of London during their youth and then mysteriously disappear, likely killed to remove any possibility of them taking the throne at a future point. Who ordered the deaths is not known.

Future Yorkist king of England

Edward is the first son of Richard Plantagenet and Cicely Neville. Following his father's death at the Battle of Wakefield, Edward would famously join forces with his father's old ally, the Earl of Warwick ('the Kingmaker') and take the crown for himself in bloody warfare. He marries the politically savvy Elizabeth Woodville.

28 April 1442



Margaret Beaufort is born

The future mother of King Henry VII is born at Bletsoe Castle, Bedfordshire, England. She would become the influential matriarch that sees the rise and establishment of the Tudor Dynasty.

31 May 1443

Richard marches on London

Disaffected with a list of grievances, Richard of York marches to London from Ireland, demanding Edmund Beaufort, the Duke of Somerset, to be removed from office due to perceived failures. He is not supported at court, however, and returns a year later empty-handed.

1452

York is Lord Protector

After Henry VI's first mental breakdown, Richard of York returns to London and is named Lord Protector. York imprisons the Duke of Somerset in the Tower of London and forges his legendary warring relationship with Margaret of Anjou.

27 March 1453

The French defeat the English at Castillon

Following the disastrous Battle of Castillon, where French forces bring down the Hundred Years' War with a decisive victory over the English, Henry VI is told of the news and has his first mental breakdown.

17 July 1453

Margaret takes back power

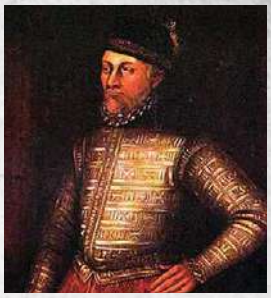
Following Henry VI's miraculous Christmas Day recovery from his madness, his wife Margaret of Anjou wastes no time in reinstating the king as the court's top power and pushes Richard out of the capital.

February 1455

First Battle of St Albans

The opening battle of the Wars of the Roses. St Albans is a small and scrappy battle but still leads to the death of three Lancastrian nobles.

22 May 1455



Warwick becomes captain of Calais

Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, becomes the captain of Calais, a powerful financial and military position that leads him into his apex of power, heavily controlling the affairs not just of England but of parts of France too.

1455

Hostilities resume

After years of strained peace, hostilities break out again, with Richard Neville scoring a victory against a numerically superior foe.

23 September 1459

The Battle of Ludford Bridge

Following a victory at Blore Heath Yorkist supporters regroup at Ludford. However, a large army led by Henry VI arrives and many of the Yorkists flee.

12 October 1459

House of York gain the upper hand

An interesting battle due to the Lancastrian Lord Edmund Grey switching side to the Yorkists mid-battle. The Yorkists won easily and gained the upper hand in the Wars.

10 July 1460

Act of Accord signed

As a compromise, it is agreed that Richard of York is the rightful successor to the throne after Henry VI. This deal excludes Henry's son, Edward of Lancaster, from the throne, angering Margaret of Anjou.

October 1460

Battle of Wakefield

The last battle for Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. Riding out from a defensive position at Sandal Castle, Richard is killed by Lancastrian forces.

30 December 1460

Lancastrian army routed

Following his father's defeat at Wakefield, Richard's son Edward routs a Lancastrian army under the leadership of Jasper Tudor.

2 February 1461

Second Battle of St. Albans

The follow-up battle to the one that kickstarted the Wars of the Roses, this time there are more men, more deaths and, importantly, a Lancastrian victory.

17 February 1461

Battle of Ferrybridge

A small, precursory skirmish before the decisive and bloody Battle of Towton, Ferrybridge sees the Yorkist leader Lord Fitzwalter killed in action.

28 March 1461

The bloodiest battle

The most brutal battle of the Wars of the Roses, this clash sees almost 30,000 men die in driving snow near the village of Towton, Yorkshire.

29 March 1461

Edward's popular coronation

After clearing a path to the throne with a hard-fought victory at the Battle of Towton, Edward of York is crowned king in an official coronation in London. The coronation is well received by the public.

28 June 1461

Battle of Hedgeley Moor

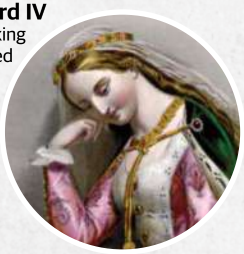
The brother of 'the Kingmaker' Warwick, John Neville, clashes with a Lancastrian force on his way to the border of Scotland to arrange a peace treaty.

25 April 1464

Elizabeth Woodville marries King Edward IV

Coming from a low-ranking family, Woodville is called 'the most beautiful woman in the Island of Britain' and she uses this trait to marry advantageously, walking down the isle with King Edward IV.

1 May 1464



Richard becomes king

Despite simply being named as Lord Protector by Edward IV, Richard III is crowned king after the infamous affair of the princes in the Tower.

6 July 1483

Buckingham revolts

Richard's ascension is immensely contentious and uprisings take place. One of the largest is a rebellion orchestrated by Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who is especially disaffected. His rebellion fails, however.

18 October 1483

Anne Neville dies

The wife of embattled king Richard III dies of what is now believed to be tuberculosis, at Westminster, London. There is an eclipse on the same day, which people see as an omen depicting the impending fall of Richard.

16 March 1485

Battle of Bosworth 22 August 1485

The decisive and climactic battle of the War of the Roses. The Battle of Bosworth sees the Yorkist king Richard III killed in combat, his 10,000-strong force routed and his enemy, the young and charismatic Henry Tudor, carve a direct path to the throne of England. He would be crowned King Henry VII months later.

The king's mother arrives at courts

Following her son Henry's victory at the Battle of Bosworth Field, Henry's mother Margaret Beaufort arrives at court and creates a new title for herself; 'My Lady the King's Mother', ensuring herself legal and social independence..

1485

Henry unites the Houses

18 January 1486

In his marriage to Elizabeth of York, the only daughter of Elizabeth Woodville, Henry VII finally unites the remnants of the two warring Houses of York and Lancaster. The product of this marriage marks the beginning of the House of Tudor and the Tudor Dynasty, which would go on to rule England until 24 March 1603.

The War of the Roses end 16 June 1487

Finally, after more than 30 years of turmoil, chaos, warfare, infighting, backstabbing, side-changing, murdering, scheming and plotting, the War of the Roses end with Henry Tudor quashing the last remaining threat to his throne at the Battle of Stoke. Henry proceeds to rule successfully for over 20 years, despite a couple of minor threats to his throne.

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Henry VIII the warlord

In pursuing dreams of victory in France, Henry threw England into decades of war and the chaos of a Europe in conflict

Written by Jonathan Hatfull

Henry VIII was born dreaming of war. When he took the throne in April 1509, with his bride Catherine of Aragon at his side, Henry knew exactly what kind of king he wanted to be. His would be a glorious reign that would restore England to the magnificence it deserved. His father, Henry VII, had become unpopular by levying punishing taxes to restore the country's finances, but the new king had no intention of focusing on matters as petty as the treasury. He would be a conqueror.

By the end of his life, Henry was a bloated and frustrated mockery of the athletic youth that he had once been. He had grown up jousting, riding and hunting, and would often participate in chivalry tournaments in disguise. He had grown up hearing the stories of the great Henry V - the hero of Agincourt - and had dreamed of the battles that years of peace had deprived him of. He was determined that he would repeat his ancestor's triumphs in France and expand England's territory beyond Calais - perhaps even as far as Paris. He wholly believed that France belonged to him and - fortunately for the English monarch - he did not have to wait long to stake his claim.

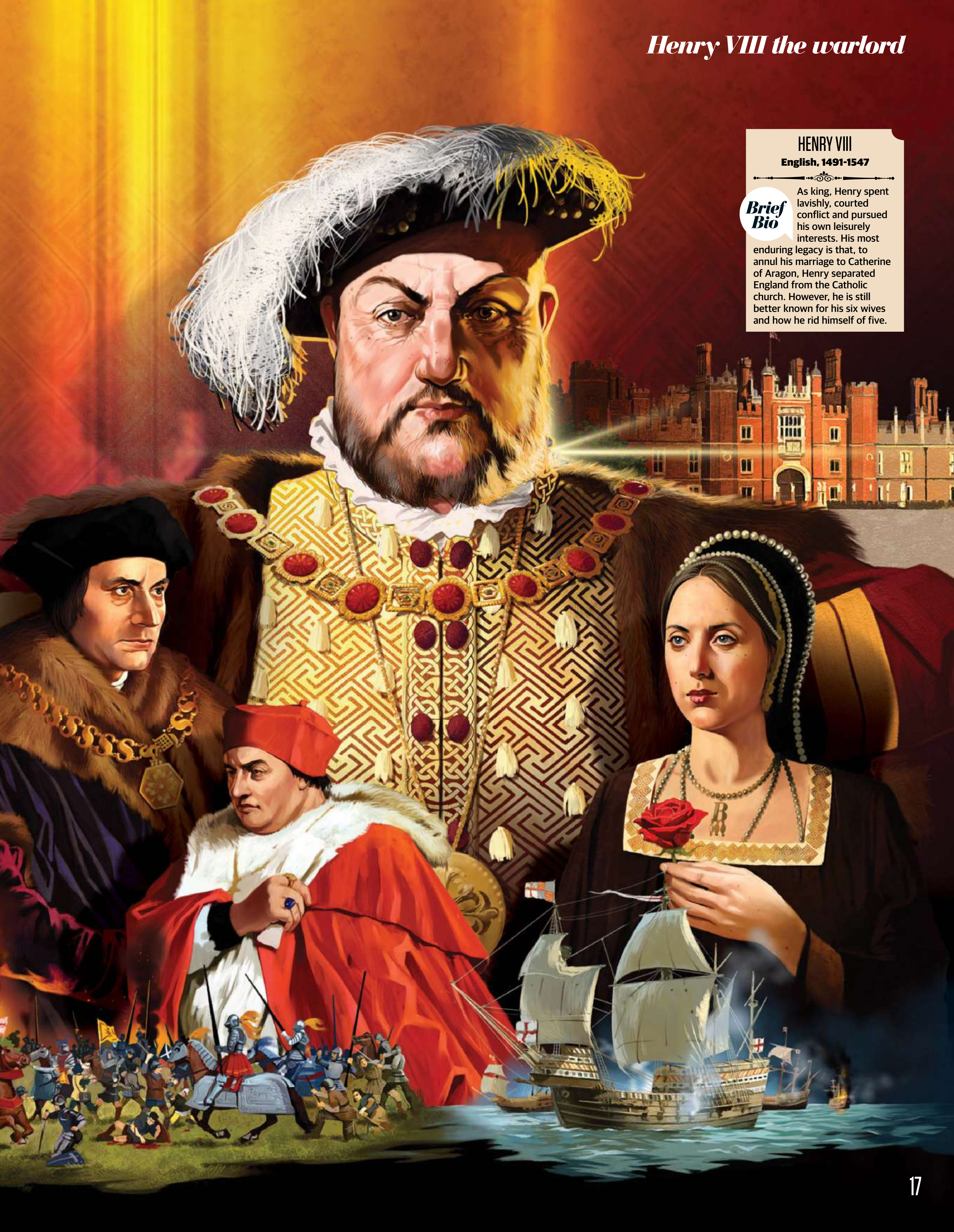
Henry had grown up in years of stultifying peace thanks to his father's treaties with France and Aragon in Spain. Meanwhile, just across the Channel, the continent was in the throes of war. The powers of Europe clashed over the possession of Naples, essentially turning Italy into one big battleground. A quarrel over the region of Romagna had set Venice against the Vatican, and so Pope Julius II rallied France, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain (under Ferdinand II) in the final weeks of 1508, planning to split the Venetian territories among them.

Venice fell, but Julius feared French occupation of Italy. He mounted an impulsive attack on his allies which backfired as French forces stormed south in retaliation. A terrified Julius formed the Holy League, and Spain and the Holy Roman Empire sided with the papacy in 1511.

Henry VIII had now been on the throne for two years with his queen Catherine of Aragon (Ferdinand's daughter) at his side. A strong royal family was vital to his dream of a glorious England and he announced that he would marry her shortly after his father died.

Catherine was fiercely loyal and determined to meet her king's expectations. She became pregnant almost immediately but their child was stillborn. It was a matter of weeks until Catherine was with child again, and she gave birth to a

"By the end of his life, Henry was a bloated and frustrated mockery of the athletic youth that he had once been"



HENRY VIII

English, 1491-1547

Brief Bio As king, Henry spent lavishly, courted conflict and pursued his own leisurely interests. His most enduring legacy is that, to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry separated England from the Catholic church. However, he is still better known for his six wives and how he rid himself of five.

son, Henry, on New Year's Day, 1511. Sadly, Henry would survive for just seven weeks.

At this point, Henry was a young king just beginning his reign. He was the head of a proud royal family and he had shown his subjects that he was not the penny-pinching tyrant that his father was. The Holy League would enable him to serve his God and show France the power of England's might. The full force of that might would be delivered by Henry's expanding Royal Navy, which would boast the world's largest and most advanced warships. It is important not to underestimate the importance of the pope's blessing. He was still a devout Catholic and would go on to condemn the Protestant Martin Luther so harshly that the pope would give him the title 'Defender of the Faith'. His religion also included the concept of Divine Right; France was his God-given property. The Holy League should have been undefeatable.

However, the first attack ended in disaster. An English force sailed to Gascony in June 1512, due to meet up with Ferdinand's army and claim the region of Aquitaine for Henry. Unfortunately, Ferdinand decided that he was more interested in claiming Navarre for himself and directed his troops in that direction. Ill-equipped and ravaged by dysentery, the English troops were forced to retreat. Henry was furious but resolute.

Less than a year later, a second invasion plan was underway, with much of the organisation left in the hands of the invaluable Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man for a king like Henry, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy while sharing a similarly rabid ambition. Wolsey was a fixer; he made sure that whatever Henry wanted, Henry got. What Henry wanted was France, and so, in April 1513, an army was raised and an attack was made on Brest. This incursion proved even more disastrous than the attempt on Aquitaine, but Henry would not be dissuaded and personally accompanied the English landing at Calais in June.

With his feet on French soil and standing at the head of an English army, Henry was exhilarated. He made straight for the town of Thérouanne and promptly laid siege to it. The Holy Roman Emperor and fellow Holy League leader, Maximilian, joined him soon afterwards, helping to assure Henry that he was on the side of the angels. Finally, Henry tasted glory on 16 August 1513 when the French attacked in the Battle of the Spurs. The light French cavalry were unable to withstand the combined forces of the invaders and fled. Henry claimed the day as a great victory, which was consolidated when Thérouanne surrendered on 22 August. The subsequent capture of Tournai was just as important to Henry, and he kept that town as an English stronghold while giving Thérouanne to Maximilian as a gesture of their allegiance.

What had Henry actually achieved? He'd taken two towns from the French, but Paris was a long way away. Nothing he'd done would tip the scales in either direction, but this was just the

> "Wolsey was the perfect right-hand man for Henry, able to counterbalance the king's violent rages with his own skilled diplomacy"

THOMAS WOLSEY

English, circa 1475-1530

Brief Bio

Cardinal Wolsey rose to power due to his ability to ensure that Henry got what he wanted. He was deeply ambitious and a skilled political operator. He became archbishop of York, and was made a cardinal and lord chancellor in 1515. He was instrumental in the peace process following Henry's first war in France, and often took public blame for Henry's mistakes. Wolsey's ambitions of becoming pope would be scuppered when Henry's determination to split from Catherine of Aragon destroyed England's relationship with Rome. Scrabbling to reconcile his position in Rome with his duty to his king, Wolsey's failure to deliver papal approval would prove to be his downfall.

Debacle at Gascony

June 1512

Henry's only concern prior to the expedition to Gascony was that he couldn't be there. It was the first attack on France during his reign and it should have been the first step in a glorious campaign. Henry was all too eager to ally himself with his father-in-law, Ferdinand II, who had similar ambitions to claim French territory. Both kings had joined the Holy League, which had been created in response to France's military activity in Italy. The League had decided that Ferdinand and Henry should attack together and it should have been an impressive display of force.

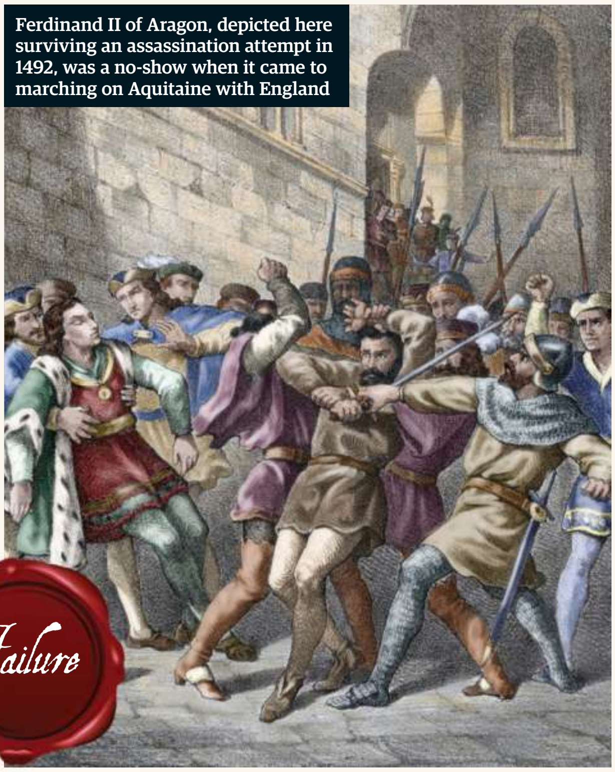
The Marquis of Dorset was given control of the English forces and the invaders were due to march with Ferdinand on Aquitaine. However, once the Marquis set foot on dry land he discovered that the Spanish king had not kept his word. Instead, Ferdinand was occupied with his own attack on Navarre, which better served the Spanish king's own interests. The Marquis's troops quarrelled with the few Spanish forces that they had been given and many of his men succumbed to dysentery. As a result of all this, he had no choice but to retreat.

Although Henry can't be blamed for the failure of this attack, it shows the Holy League for what it really was. The kings were fighting with the pope's blessing and the glory of God, but they were all out for themselves. Once the fighting started, each monarch was really only interested in what land they could claim – their allies only functioned as a bank and backup.

Verdict

The forced retreat enraged Henry, pushing him towards leading his own attack, and also sowed the seeds of distrust that would come to the fore throughout his further campaigns.

Failure



Ferdinand II of Aragon, depicted here surviving an assassination attempt in 1492, was a no-show when it came to marching on Aquitaine with England

Victory at Flodden Field

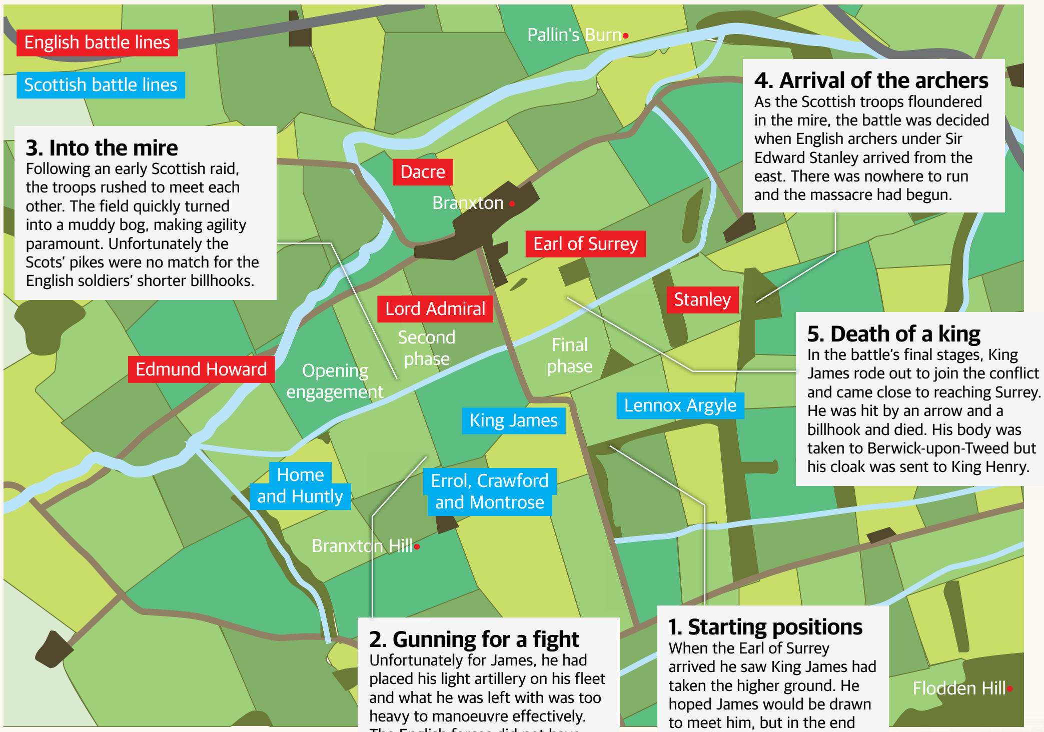
9 September 1513

With the king's attention focused on France, the timing was ripe for an attack from the north. King Louis XII reached out to his ally in Scotland and James IV was very agreeable. He wrote to Henry instructing him to abandon his war on the French – an instruction that Henry roundly ignored. The Scottish troops rallied and marched south to the border, sending word that they intended to invade. Having appeased their sense of honour, they waited for the English troops at Flodden.

Catherine of Aragon was acting as regent while her husband was at war in France. Catherine was a woman who believed fiercely in duty, honour and loyalty, and the prospect of losing a battle in her husband's absence was too awful to even consider.

Together with the Earl of Surrey, Catherine raised an army from the Midlands to meet the Scottish invaders. Surrey met the Scottish army at Flodden Field and subjected them to a crushing defeat. The number of Scottish dead numbered in the thousands, and King James IV himself was among the fatalities.

While Henry's refusal to leave France may have been the final straw that prompted the attack, he had very little to do with the result of the battle – it was the Earl of Surrey who won the day. The Scottish king fell on the battlefield, and his cloak was sent to France as a trophy for Henry. A decisive victory, but not one which can be attributed to any military excellence on Henry's part.



3. Into the mire
Following an early Scottish raid, the troops rushed to meet each other. The field quickly turned into a muddy bog, making agility paramount. Unfortunately the Scots' pikes were no match for the English soldiers' shorter billhooks.

4. Arrival of the archers
As the Scottish troops floundered in the mire, the battle was decided when English archers under Sir Edward Stanley arrived from the east. There was nowhere to run and the massacre had begun.

5. Death of a king
In the battle's final stages, King James rode out to join the conflict and came close to reaching Surrey. He was hit by an arrow and a billhook and died. His body was taken to Berwick-upon-Tweed but his cloak was sent to King Henry.

2. Gunning for a fight
Unfortunately for James, he had placed his light artillery on his fleet and what he was left with was too heavy to manoeuvre effectively. The English forces did not have this problem and promptly started their bombardment.

1. Starting positions
When the Earl of Surrey arrived he saw King James had taken the higher ground. He hoped James would be drawn to meet him, but in the end Surrey flanked from the east and arrived from the north.

Verdict

While the victory would assure Henry of England's military might, it was the start of a long and costly struggle with the Scots that would distract him from his goals in France.

Success

The Scottish army outnumbered the English by about 15,000 at Flodden, but some clever tactics won out

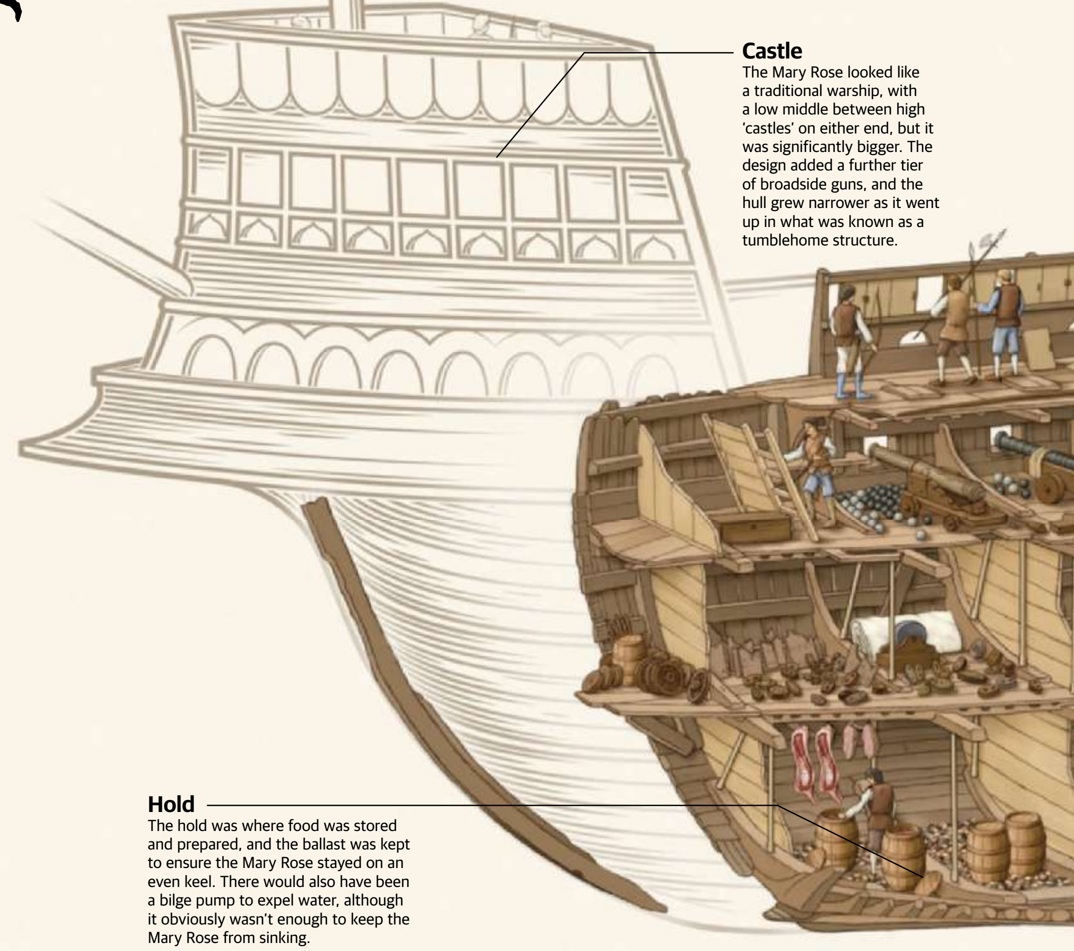
Father of the Royal Navy

Henry might be known as the founder of the Royal Navy but its creation had begun during the reign of Henry VII. Five royal warships had been built by the time Henry VIII took the throne, but the young king wanted more.

In addition to his plans to sail for France, Henry knew that Scotland had invested in their own navy and that he was potentially facing a two-pronged attack by sea. Henry ordered the construction of two great warships: the infamous Mary Rose (which embarrassingly and mysteriously sank while leading the defence against the French at the Solent) and the Peter Pomegranate. Henry's ambition knew no limits and the English Navy would be the biggest, the most advanced and the most fearsome. He equipped his ships with the latest guns and the heaviest cannons, while employing new innovations like hinged gun ports. By the end of Henry's reign, his fleet numbered 58.

Enormous gunships aside, perhaps the most important innovations Henry made to the navy were on land. He created the first naval dock in Portsmouth, he gave the Grant of the Royal Charter to Trinity House (which developed beacons, buoys and lighthouses), and he created the Navy Board and the Office of Admiralty. Henry is known as the father of the Royal Navy because he didn't just bulk up its muscle, he created its backbone.

Inside the Mary Rose



Castle
The Mary Rose looked like a traditional warship, with a low middle between high 'castles' on either end, but it was significantly bigger. The design added a further tier of broadside guns, and the hull grew narrower as it went up in what was known as a tumblehome structure.

Hold
The hold was where food was stored and prepared, and the ballast was kept to ensure the Mary Rose stayed on an even keel. There would also have been a bilge pump to expel water, although it obviously wasn't enough to keep the Mary Rose from sinking.

beginning. Henry was in his element. He was re-enacting the glories of Henry V and who knew how far he could go?

Even as Henry celebrated his victories in France, trouble at home soon threatened to bring everything to a halt. All too aware of the English forces currently on their soil, the French reached out to King James IV of Scotland and suggested that this might be the perfect opportunity to mount an attack of their own. James marched south to Flodden Ridge with his armies to await the English. While England may have seemed weak, Queen Catherine, acting as regent, had no intention of allowing such a challenge to go unanswered. An army was raised and met the Scots on 9 September. The English victory was brutally decisive and King James was killed. The gleeful queen sent the fallen monarch's bloody cloak to her husband in France, with the message: "In this your Grace shall see how I keep my promise, sending you for your banners a king's coat." Henry was conquering his enemies abroad, while his queen was seeing off attackers at home.

Sadly for the warrior king, peace was just around the corner, whether Henry wanted it or not. He had been acting as a war chest to his allies and England's coffers were so depleted that there was simply no way that he could carry on alone. He would have to make peace. The next few years presented Henry with a new potential ally, and a new enemy. The ambitious Francis I took the French crown, while the Austrian King Charles V was elected Holy Roman Emperor (adding Spain and a huge portion of Italy to his kingdom). Wolsey, aware of the financial sinkhole that the wars had been, worked hard to keep the peace. He managed to put quills to paper with the Treaty of London in 1518, while friendship would be forged at the Field of the Cloth of Gold on 7 June 1520. The plan was that Henry and Francis would spend a week enjoying the festivities and settling their differences, while Wolsey met with Charles V. It did not go according to plan.

For all Wolsey's good intentions, this attempt at friendship was doomed from the start. Henry had never wanted peace to start with, and Francis had no intention of bowing down to his English counterpart. Ambitious, stubborn and proud, the two men were too similar for any attempts at friendship to work. After the first meeting was concluded, the two kings engaged in a week of oneupmanship and competition. It was a week dedicated to flaunting power and status; the cloth of gold referred to the ludicrously lavish tents. Henry was determined to prove his athleticism and joined the competitions, but Francis had a similar idea. Henry had to suffer the humiliation of losing to the French king in a wrestling match, and it is hardly surprising that the only result of the meeting was a greater sense of hatred. Instead, Henry turned his diplomatic attentions to Charles V.

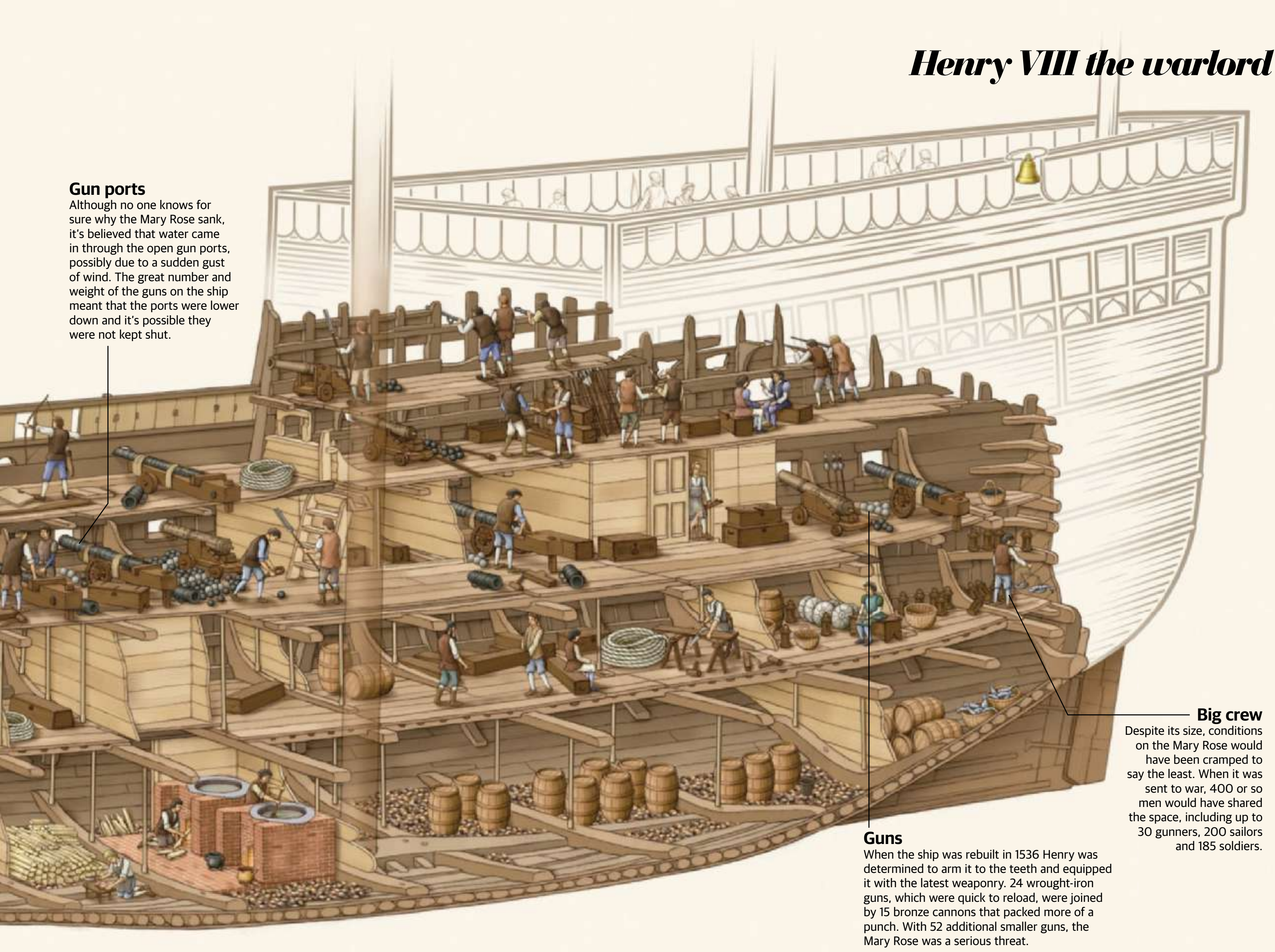
THOMAS MORE

English, 1478-1535

Brief Bio

Thomas More trained as a lawyer and nearly became a monk before entering Henry's employ in 1517, taking on a variety of roles from interpreter to writer and chief diplomat. The two quickly became close confidants and More was knighted four years later, before becoming the speaker of the House of Commons in 1523. It was his strong Catholic faith that would prove his downfall. Although he was made lord chancellor in 1529, he rejected the formation of the Church of England with Henry at its head, so resigned soon after. His refusal to accept the new denomination would lead to his arrest and eventual execution on 6 July 1535.

Henry's alliance with the Habsburgs had continued throughout the years of peace, despite one or two hiccups involving marriage arrangements. Crucially, Charles and Henry shared a mutual loathing of Martin Luther and King Francis. His hatred of the French king meant that war was inevitable and Henry eagerly awaited the perfect opportunity to



Gun ports
Although no one knows for sure why the Mary Rose sank, it's believed that water came in through the open gun ports, possibly due to a sudden gust of wind. The great number and weight of the guns on the ship meant that the ports were lower down and it's possible they were not kept shut.

Big crew
Despite its size, conditions on the Mary Rose would have been cramped to say the least. When it was sent to war, 400 or so men would have shared the space, including up to 30 gunners, 200 sailors and 185 soldiers.

Guns
When the ship was rebuilt in 1536 Henry was determined to arm it to the teeth and equipped it with the latest weaponry. 24 wrought-iron guns, which were quick to reload, were joined by 15 bronze cannons that packed more of a punch. With 52 additional smaller guns, the Mary Rose was a serious threat.

© Courtesy of the Mary Rose Trust

mount another attack. When hostilities resumed in 1521, Henry declared that England was now allied with the Holy Roman Emperor and signed the Treaty of Windsor in 1522 to make 'The Great Enterprise' official. At this point, Henry could not afford a full-scale invasion and an attack on Picardy failed due to a lack of communication and, perhaps more importantly, trust.

> "Henry's ambition to conquer France and claim the throne for himself was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it"

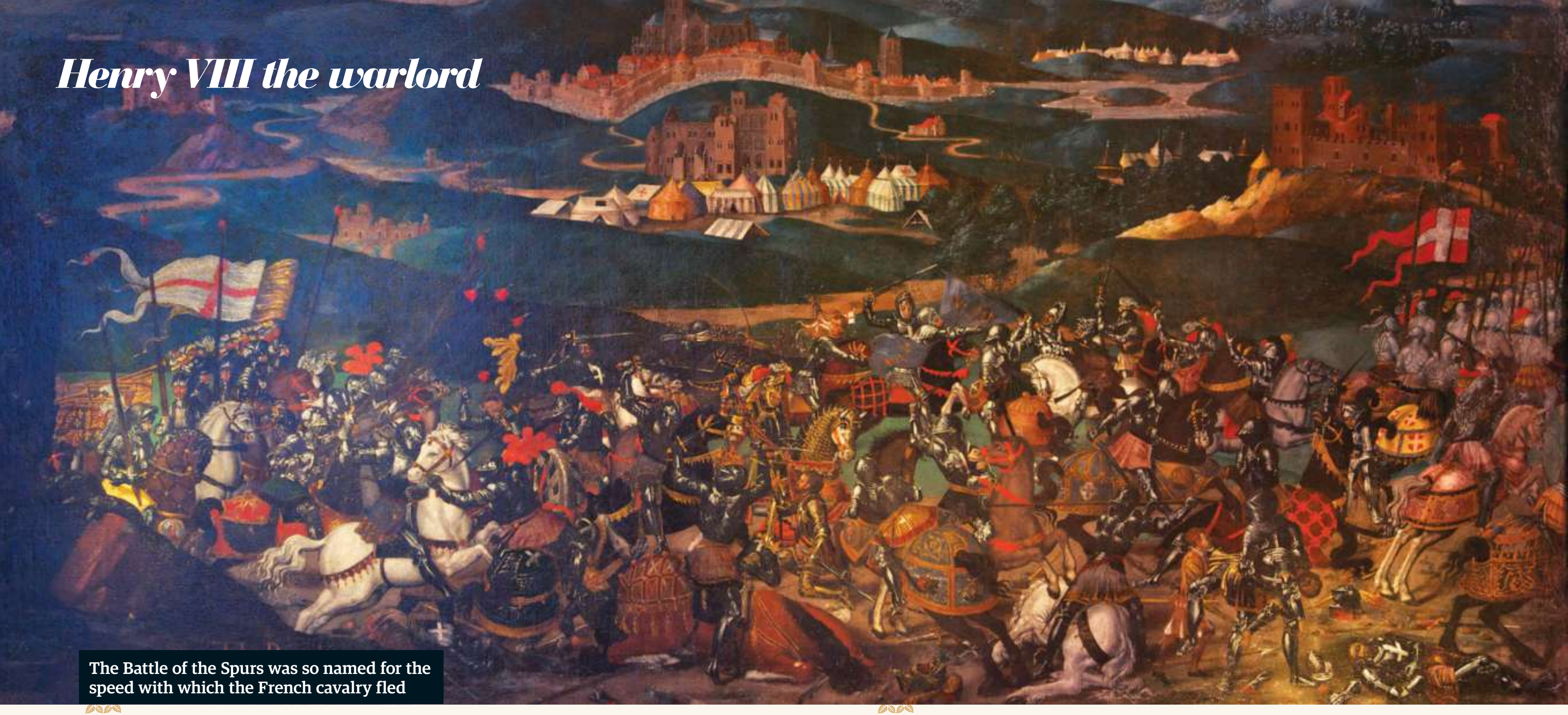
Henry's ambition to conquer France and claim the throne for himself was hamstrung by the fact that he couldn't afford it. He had previously helped to bankroll Ferdinand and Maximilian and he had seen them make peace without him. Henry was scared that Charles might repeat his father's trick and, for his part, Charles had no particular interest in seeing Henry on the French throne. Their mutual distrust would only grow.

Trust wasn't the only problem. In an echo of 1513, Henry was distracted by the constant threat from the north. Whenever he began a campaign in France, the Scottish forces would threaten attack, forcing him to wage a war on two fronts. Henry was enraged and infuriated but he would not give up. He mounted another attack in 1523 to support the rebelling Duke of Bourbon, but Charles sent no help and the English troops were forced to retreat.

The line was finally crossed when Charles captured Francis at the Battle of Pavia in 1525 and showed no interest in sharing his spoils with the English king. Henry decided that the time had come for a full-scale invasion. With nowhere near enough money, Henry and Cardinal Wolsey tried to create the 'Amicable Grant' tax to pay for the attack, but opposition proved so fierce that Henry was forced to scrap his plans and publicly blame Wolsey. The humiliation of backpedalling helped Henry to realise that he was not going to get what he wanted. He signed the Treaty of the More with Francis's mother, Louise of Savoy, and turned his attention towards his family.

Not surprisingly Charles's rejection rankled Henry. The Holy Roman Emperor's increased presence in Italy once again caused the panicking Pope Clement VII to create the League of Cognac, which united Venice, Florence and France against Charles. Henry was not a member, but offered to help bankroll the group. His treaty with Francis in the Treaty of Westminster on 30 April 1527 was a sign that his mind was elsewhere.

Henry was desperate to be separated from Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn. He had no interest in a divorce and instead wanted to prove that it had been illegal to marry his brother's widow. This would soothe the good Catholic in him, but it set him against Charles V, who was appalled by what the accusation said about his aunt, Catherine. However, circumstances were not in Henry's favour; Charles had attacked Rome in retaliation for the League's advances. Pope Clement VII was now his prisoner and Catherine's nephew made his influence felt. Clement gained his freedom in December, but the emperor had no interest in peace talks with the League. Once again, Charles had frustrated Henry's plans and he declared war with the Holy Roman Emperor in January. However, England lacked the finances to



The Battle of the Spurs was so named for the speed with which the French cavalry fled

Battle of the Spurs

16 August 1513

Henry and his English forces had been laying siege to the town of Thérouanne since July 1513. Following the embarrassment at Gascony, he had finally arrived in France to lead his army to great conquest. He camped close, but not too close to the city, and laid siege. A stalemate ensued until French action on 16 August tipped the scales.

The French forces had seen Maximilian's Holy Roman Army join Henry's and decided that the time had come to attempt a counterattack. On the morning of 16 August French light cavalry, a few thousand strong, attacked the invaders' positions. However, word had reached the Holy League's camp of the planned attack and a trap had been prepared, leading to a brutal skirmish. It was an attack that was doomed to failure, with Henry and Maximilian's combined forces coming to roughly 30,000 men. The speed with which the surviving French rode away led to the name of the battle.

It was not a significant military victory in other terms than morale. Henry had been looking for a victory to claim in France, and this encounter was the first real battle of his campaign. He celebrated it but the actual gains from the Battle of the Spurs and the subsequent fall of Thérouanne would impress nothing but his ego. At great financial expense, Henry's dreams of Agincourt came a little closer.

Verdict

The victory at the Battle of the Spurs did more for Henry's ego than it did for the outcome of his campaign.

Success

do any more than declare itself at war; it's unlikely that this worried Charles too much.

The situation in Europe finally resolved itself in 1529 with the Treaty of Cambrai. However, Henry's determination to end his marriage had made enemies out of his old allies. Francis offered to plead his case to the new Pope Clement, but he was more concerned with cementing his own alliance with the Holy See. Anne Boleyn's pregnancy pushed Henry into taking decisive action and his marriage to Catherine was annulled by Thomas Cranmer in 1533. In the eyes of the English court, his secret marriage to Anne was now completely legal. Finally, Henry was recognised as Head of the Church and abolished the right of Appeal to Rome. England was no longer Catholic and the pope had no more influence over the king.

Although he was overjoyed at finally having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was a dangerous prospect indeed. He tried to take advantage of the frequent arguments between Charles and Francis, but in 1538 the excommunication order for Henry was finally delivered and the pope declared that the Vatican would support anyone who deposed the English king; his death was something God would turn a blind eye to. Luckily for Henry, Charles was busy with the Ottoman Empire and, if Francis planned to attack England, he had no intention of doing so alone. Henry knew that the differences between Francis and Charles would prevent them from ever remaining allies for long. He just had to be patient. Finally, in 1542, they declared war and Henry could return to the battlefield.

By this point Henry was obese, sickly and prone to violent rages. The war gave him a sense of purpose and Charles was finally back on his side. For all their past differences, now there were no personal reasons why Henry and Charles could not resume their alliance. Catherine of Aragon had passed away and, by executing Anne Boleyn, Henry had removed the insult to Charles's honour. Across the Channel, Francis wasn't sitting idly by and he knew how to keep Henry distracted.

Scotland had proved to be a continual thorn in Henry's paw during his attempts to invade France, attacking every time his attention was focused across the Channel. Having hoped that James V would be a more amenable ally than his predecessor, Henry was livid when Scotland refused to follow him in separating from Rome. When James did not appear at the diplomatic talks at York in 1541, outright conflict followed. Following a minor Scottish victory at the Battle of Haddon Rig in 1542, the two armies met at Solway Moss. In a brutal echo of Flodden Field, the Scottish army suffered a humiliating defeat. James V died of fever about two weeks later and Henry, buoyed by such a decisive victory, turned his attention to France.

Henry was taking no half measures and invaded France on two fronts. Stretching his finances as far as they would go, he sent troops to Montreuil under the Duke of Norfolk, while another force attacked Boulogne under the Duke of Suffolk. While Norfolk

> "Though he was overjoyed at having the queen he lusted after, Henry realised that a Europe united against him was a dangerous prospect

failed, Suffolk succeeded. Henry himself arrived to take charge of the siege which lasted from July until September when the city fell. He basked in the glory of a French city claimed, but his elation was short-lived. Henry was forced to turn his attention back to Scotland, where a rebellion had sprung up. His retaliation was so brutal that it became known as the 'Rough Wooing'.

The invasion of France fell apart when Charles signed another continental peace treaty that excluded England. Francis had no intention of making peace with Henry and mounted an invasion in the summer of 1545. It was a very real threat but, fortunately for Henry, the attack was a dismal failure and Francis was forced to retreat. The Treaty of Camp brought an end to the years of war in Henry's reign, as England, France, Scotland and the Holy Roman Empire agreed to peace in 1546. He died a year later, sickly, angry and defeated.

What does Henry VIII's history as a military commander show us? It shows him to be a man unable or unwilling to grow out of the romantic, heroic dreams of his youth. He was constantly fighting for the glory that he saw for himself and for England. In his mind, France was English property that no one before him had been able to claim. He saw himself as the king who would bring it under English rule, and it was a childhood dream that became an adult delusion. By joining with allies who had no interest in his dream, and reacting rashly to insults, real and imagined, Henry spent many years at war with little to show for it.

The Siege of Boulogne

19 July – 18 September 1544

The Siege of Boulogne would be the closest thing to an unqualified victory that Henry would get in all his years of war with France. However, the conquest of a single city at tremendous expense tells us that unqualified is not really the most accurate adjective to use. Henry had been waiting for an excuse to resume hostilities with France and he eagerly joined his old ally (and old enemy) Charles V when war broke out in 1544. He raised a huge invasion force to set sail across the Channel.

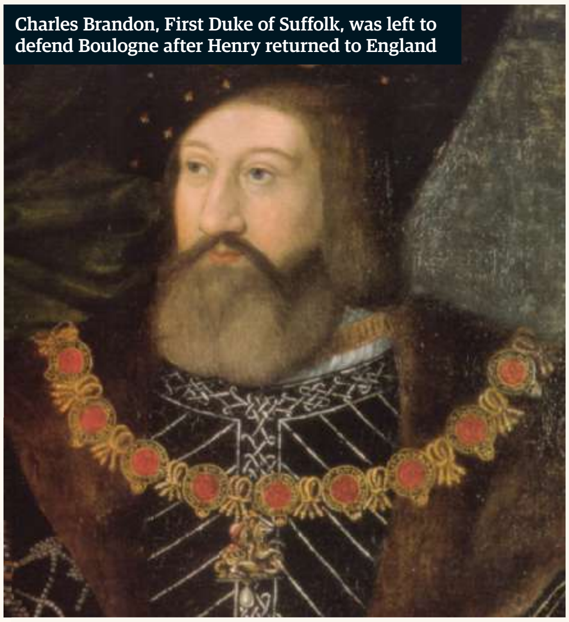
The English force was split into two; attacking Montreuil and Boulogne, Henry himself joining the latter. While the attack on Montreuil failed, the Siege of Boulogne, though lengthy, would result in success. The siege began on 19 July and the English forces quickly took the lower part of the city. However, they were unable to breach the castle walls and the siege stretched from weeks into months. Henry wrote to his wife (number six, Catherine Parr) praising the strength of his opponents, but it was only a matter of time before the French were forced to surrender, which they did after Henry's forces tunnelled beneath the walls.

However, Henry's triumph would be short-lived. He learned that Charles, fearful of the Ottoman threat and caring little about Henry's personal ambition, had made his own peace treaty with France without England. Henry returned home to attend to Scotland, leaving Boulogne occupied, and Francis began preparations for a counterattack.

Verdict

Henry may have taken the city, but the financial cost was enormous. Although Charles's treaty led to threats of a French invasion, Francis's attempts ultimately failed.

Success


Charles Brandon, First Duke of Suffolk, was left to defend Boulogne after Henry returned to England

The Rough Wooing

December 1543 – March 1550

The Rough Wooing was the result of Henry's failed attempt to subdue Scotland while he turned his attention to France. Although he might have won a huge victory at the Battle of Solway Moss, Henry's hopes that the Scottish would be amenable to peace proved to be ill-founded. He had given them his terms, but Henry may as well have given them a blank piece of paper, as Scotland declared its renewed allegiance to France.

At the time, Henry was planning his invasion with Charles V and could not afford to be distracted by yet another full-blown conflict with his neighbours in the north. Deciding against open battle, Henry commanded that a force should sail north and show the Scots how furious he was. It was led by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who was told to "Burn Edinburgh town, so razed and defaced when you have sacked and gotten what you can of it, as there may remain forever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God."

Towns and villages were to be burned down and the king's instructions as to what to do with anyone who opposed Hertford were clear, he was commanded to continue "putting man, woman and child to fire and sword, without exception, where any resistance shall be made against you." Hertford obeyed his liege's orders with relish, sending frequent reports of his conquests back to his king, and capturing Edinburgh and the nearby port at Leith. However, France did not sit idly by and sent forces to help Scottish counterattacks. Aggression between England and Scotland would only be (temporarily) halted by the Treaty of Camp in 1546.

Verdict

Although it had the immediate effect that Henry wanted, which was to give a show of force and wrath, the Rough Wooing only served to deeper entrench hatred and distrust of the English.

Failure

© Joe Cummings; Look and Learn; Alamy

ANNE BOLEYN

Follow the romantic beginning and disastrous end of the love affair that rocked the very foundations of England itself

Written by Frances White

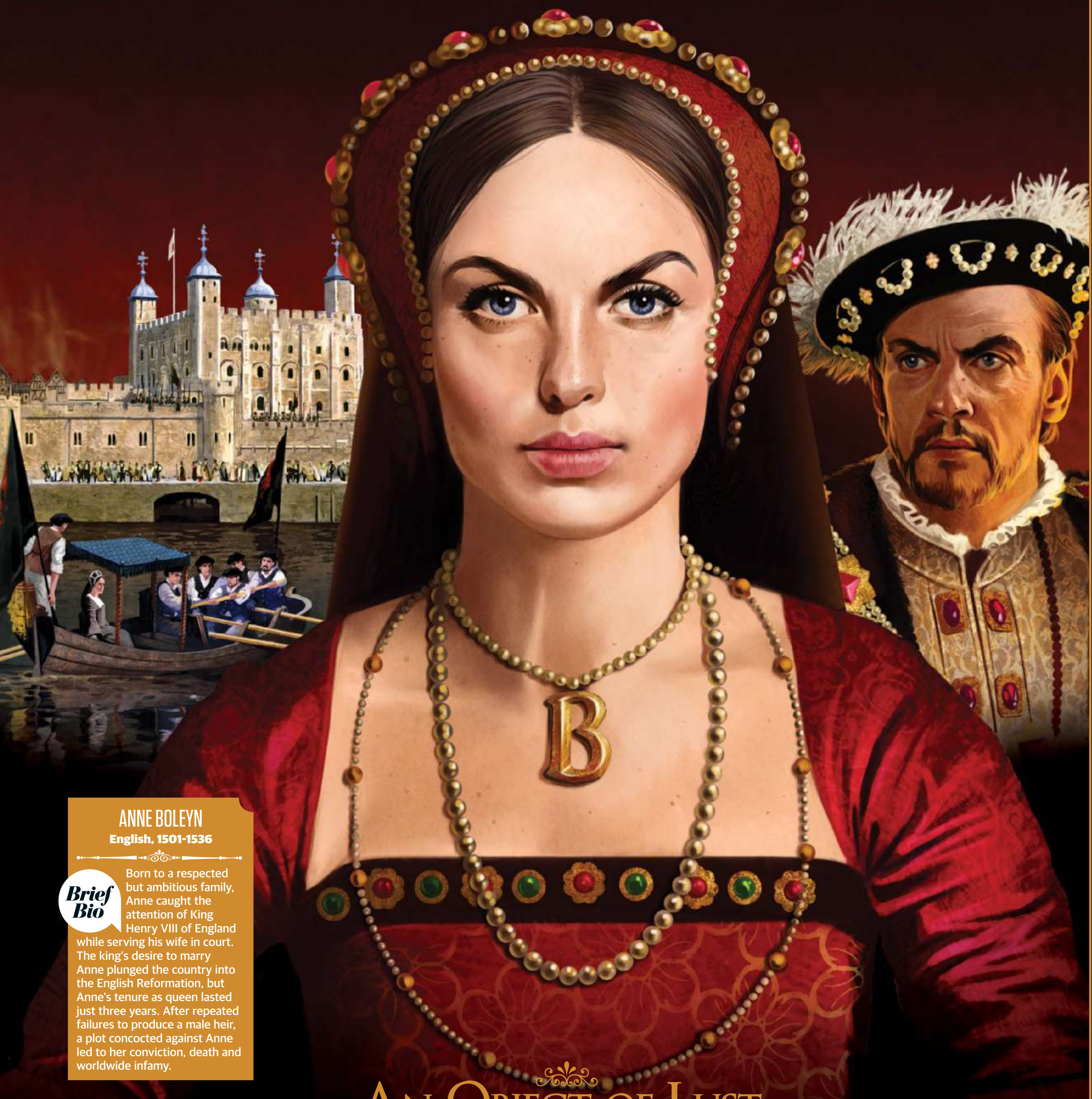
The sun streamed down on the brisk spring morning as a figure emerged near from four-turreted White Tower of the Tower of London. The crowd that had gathered there were oddly quiet; they watched silently as the slender woman passed through them. She was dressed in a loose, grey gown, so dark it was almost black, with a red petticoat underneath. An ermine mantle was draped around her neck, and her long dark hair was tied above her head, exposing her thin, dainty neck. Two of her ladies accompanied her as she climbed the scaffold that had been erected for the day's sombre event. Her steps were strong and firm, her countenance steely and unreadable.

Although the strength of her steps was remarkable for one facing her death, when she turned to the crowd and spoke her voice trembled. However, her words rang out loud and clear. She begged the people to forgive her if she had not treated them with gentleness, and then prayed that God would have mercy for those who had condemned her. She ended by praying for the king, who was a good, gentle, and sovereign lord. All these things she uttered, but not once did she admit her guilt for the crimes she would die for. Her words were so sweet, her manner so graceful, that many gathered there shed a tear for the condemned woman.

She wished farewell to her weeping ladies, and removed her headdress, tucking her long, thick hair under a coif. As she knelt upright, one of her ladies came forward and tied a blindfold over her eyes. She began to mutter under her breath "Jesu receive my soul; O Lord God have pity on my soul", over and over again. She prayed silently as she received her husband's final gift, a swordsman of Saint-Omer; he had given her the mercy of a sword in place of an axe. The executioner raised the sword high, its sharpened blade gleaming in the sunlight, then brought it down upon her thin neck. It was all over in a single stroke. The queen was dead.

It is portrayed, often unfairly, that Anne Boleyn descended on King Henry VIII like some sort of wicked, conniving temptress, luring him away with her dark looks and feminine charms from his almost 24-year-long marriage, young daughter and queen beloved by the population. But Henry had been anything but loyal to Catherine, and had already fathered his illegitimate son Henry Fitzroy before Anne was in the picture. In fact, it had been Anne's sister, Mary, who initially caught the king's attention, and he conducted an affair with the older Boleyn sister that may have resulted in two more children. When Henry was first drawn to Anne, it is highly likely that he desired her simply as another mistress. But she had other plans.

The new lady in waiting was a captivating figure. Having recently returned from serving the French Queen Claude, she boasted an elegance and poise that instantly created a stir. Her dark features were unfashionable for the time, but her deep brown eyes and unusual beauty caught the attention of more than just the king. Among those competing for her affections were Sir Thomas Wyatt, an acclaimed poet, and Henry Percy, who even went as far as to secure Anne's hand in a secret betrothal. However, all those with their gaze fixed upon the enchanting young debutante soon found themselves facing a rival they could not hope to better - the king of England.



ANNE BOLEYN

English, 1501-1536

Brief Bio

Born to a respected but ambitious family, Anne caught the attention of King Henry VIII of England while serving his wife in court. The king's desire to marry Anne plunged the country into the English Reformation, but Anne's tenure as queen lasted just three years. After repeated failures to produce a male heir, a plot concocted against Anne led to her conviction, death and worldwide infamy.

AN OBJECT OF LUST

Appearance

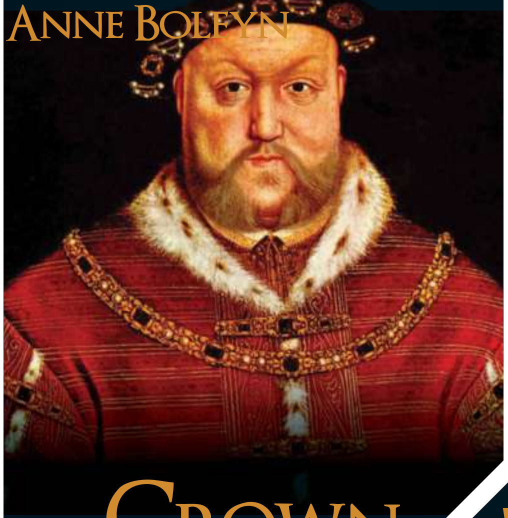
Although opinion is divided on Anne's true appearance, she presented herself with great grace and manners. She was dressed in the latest fashions and is consistently described as being elegant and sophisticated. Henry was captivated by the bewitching and fair persona Anne presented at court.

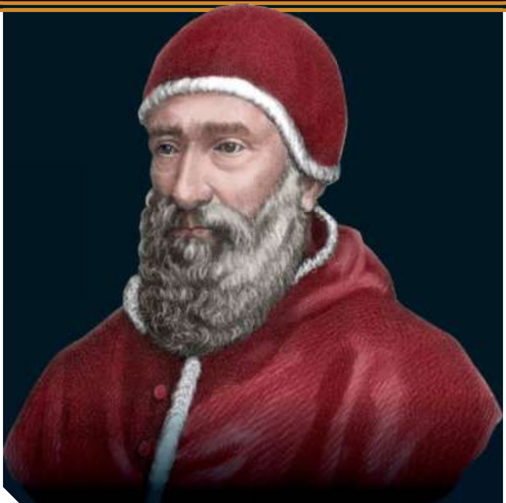
Social standing

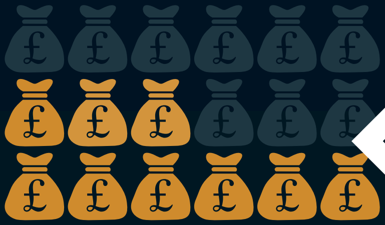
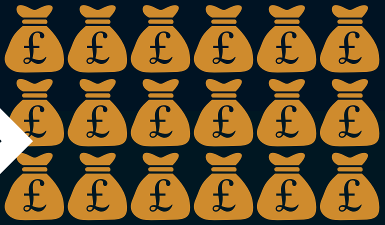
Although her father was descended from middle-class tradesmen, through her mother Anne's ancestry was linked to Margaret of France and her husband, King Edward I. Her ambitious father boosted the family reputation at court and he entered the king's most intimate circle.

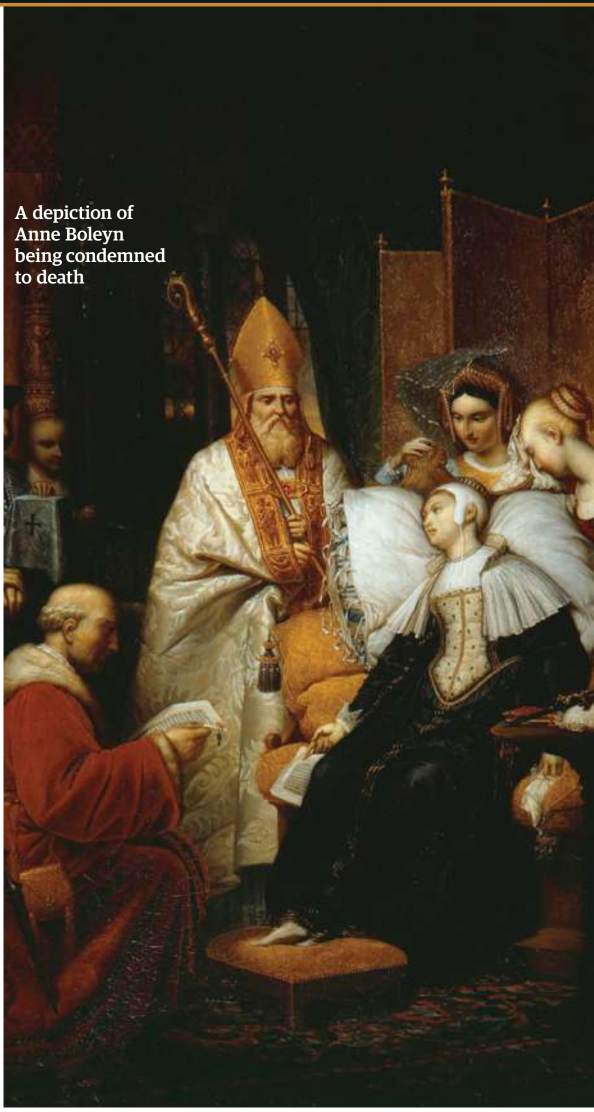
Intelligence

Henry was desperate to be seen as a modern, cosmopolitan man and did everything to beat his rival King Francis I of France. Not only had Anne served in the French court, but she was also intelligent, witty and an accomplished singer and musician; certainly a catch for a man looking to prove his suitability to the throne.





	CROWN KING HENRY VIII	V	CHURCH POPE CLEMENT VII
NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS	2 MILLION		OVER 75 MILLION
WEALTH			
ON DIVORCE	"If a man shall take his brother's wife it is an unclean thing... they shall be childless" King Henry VIII quoting the *Bible*, Leviticus, 20:21, as justification for seeking a divorce from Catherine of Aragon		"Forbids Henry to remarry until the decision of the case, and declares that if he does all issue will be illegitimate"
DRESS SENSE	PURPLE VELVET, **ITALIAN AND FRENCH FASHION,** LARGE PUFFED SLEEVES, **FEATHERED HAT,** FUR MANTLE, **MULTIPLE EXPENSIVE PIECES OF JEWELLERY**		STRICT POPE ATTIRE, **CHOIR DRESS – A WHITE SILK CASSOCK,** SCULL CAP AND A LACE ROCHET
ON RELIGION	"For all the prelates at their consecration make an oath to the Pope clean contrary to the oath that they make to us, so that they seem to be his subjects, and not ours"		"Forbids any one in England, universities, parliaments, courts of law, etc, to make any decision in an affair the judgment of which is reserved for the Holy See"



A depiction of Anne Boleyn being condemned to death

Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn

TUDOR COURTSHIP

Get set up

As forced marriage is forbidden by the Church, marriages can't strictly be 'arranged', but couples are often matched up by their parents to ensure a suitor of acceptable social standing. Love matches do occur, but are only really acceptable if the wealth of both is suitable.

Shower her in gifts

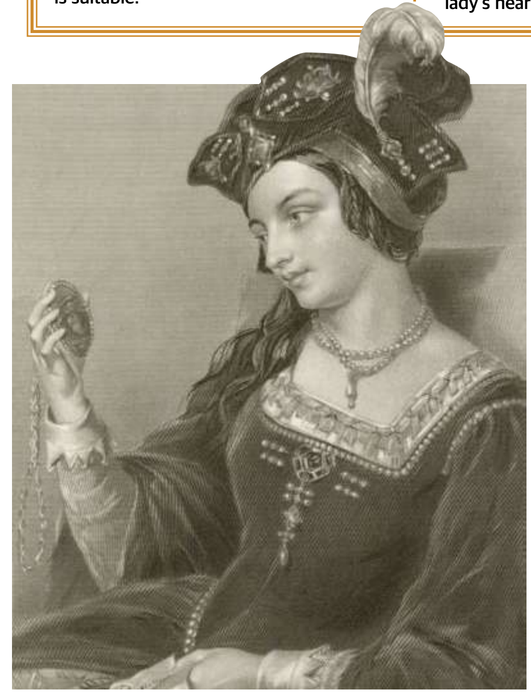
Once a suitable lady has been chosen, a Tudor gentleman will begin the first stage of courtship in which he will visit her frequently and bestow her with an array of valuable gifts to win her over. Ribbons, girdles and gloves can all be used to capture a lady's heart.

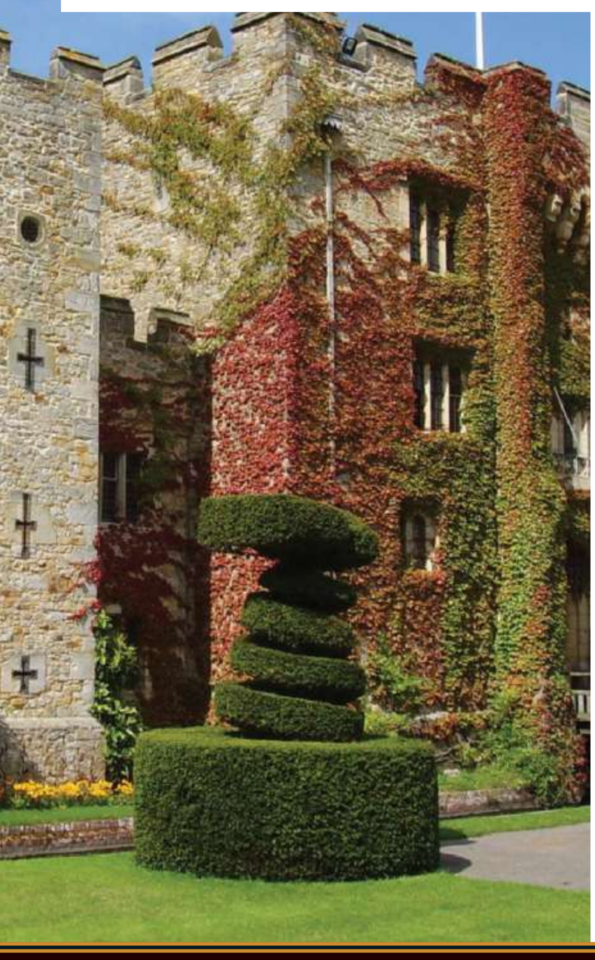
Show your commitment

Known as betrothal or handfasting, when the couple have agreed to marry they will go through a period similar to a modern-day engagement. This often involves a public ceremony where pledges are made. After the betrothal the couple are allowed to begin sexual relations.

Get married

The marriage ceremony itself is a very public and high-profile affair in a church with the more guests the better. Wedding dresses will usually be the bride's best dress and, for those who can afford it, the ceremony will be followed by a great feast with food, music and dancing.





Henry prided himself on his image – he was obsessed with his appearance and was constantly attempting to prove himself as an accomplished, charismatic and capable leader. With his own claim to the throne emerging from the turbulent War of the Roses, he was determined to do everything in his power to secure his and his descendant's place as king. As models of the Renaissance man, Henry had a friendly rivalry with Francis I of France and did anything he could do to outmatch him. Anne was trained at the French courts herself, and boasted all the glamour, exceptional skills and intelligence Henry wished to embody himself. He wanted her instantly.

However, unlike her sister, Anne was not a weak-willed girl who would bow to the will of a man. Anne's courtly education in the royal palaces of the Netherlands and France had given her grace, elegance and a beautiful singing voice – but it had also given her one other thing: knowledge of the game of courtly love. She knew what became of the mistresses of kings; she had witnessed her own sister tossed aside the moment his attention had been drawn by another. She had already been denied the love of her sweetheart, Henry Percy, having been deemed unworthy by his father. Henry's obvious affections for her would provide the perfect opportunity to prove just how much she was worth. Anne did something no woman before her had dared to do: she said no to the king.

Rather than outraging him, Anne's rejection spurred Henry to chase her more fervently. He bestowed her with gifts, penned love letter after love letter, but the enchanting but strong-willed woman still said no. When he offered for her to be his official mistress, that too was rejected. She was everything all the women in his life had never been – rather than agreeing politely, she challenged his opinions, debating with him on subjects such as theology. She was passionate, brash and fiery, and she had well and truly set Henry alight. There was no doubt in his mind that such a young, virile woman would bear him the male heir that would ensure the continuation of his line. Sometime in 1527, after a year of chasing her, he proposed marriage to Anne, and finally she said yes.

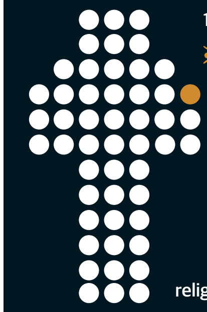
17 love letters Henry wrote to Anne have survived and are stored in the Vatican Library

While we have reams of Henry's love letters, and the extreme decisions that would follow his proposal as evidence of his strong feelings for Anne, we can only speculate on what was going on in the young woman's head. She was under immense pressure from her ambitious father and uncle to elevate the family name – something a match with a king would no doubt achieve – but the lengths to which Henry would go to ensure she became queen must have been captivating for the younger daughter of a family with commoner roots. Because Henry did indeed have great lengths to travel, there was the small matter of his current wife, the now-infertile Catherine of Aragon.

Henry, at least in the early part of his reign, was well known as a devout Catholic. He had even been named a so-called 'defender of the faith' by Pope Leo X, and it was to the *Bible* he turned to seek an annulment for his 24-year-long marriage to the mother of his only legitimate child to date. He argued with Pope Clement VII that his marriage to Catherine, who had been his late brother's wife, directly went against the words in Leviticus 20:21. But the Pope wasn't a fool; to allow the annulment would contradict the decision made by a previous infallible Pope to allow the marriage between Henry and Catherine in the first place. Again Henry was told no and again he was denied Anne and the male heir he so badly desired.

Henry had heard enough 'nos' so on 23 May 1533 he took matters into his own hands and ordered the newly elected and specially selected archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, to grant him the annulment he so desperately needed. That simple action would have consequences that would reach far beyond Henry or Anne's own life, forever changing the religious and political landscape of the country, leading to the English Reformation. Breaking away from Rome was a rash, dangerous and groundbreaking move, but Henry finally had what he wanted – he was allowed to marry the enchanting Anne. And it was just in time, because

ENGLISH REFORMATION IN NUMBERS



1 in 50 was in religious orders

800

religious houses taken over by Henry

10,000

monks, nuns, friars and canons lost their homes

£84,324,100

The amount the crown profited per year as a result of the Reformation

200

The years the monarchy had been trying to suppress religious power

30,000

The number of people who took part in the Pilgrimage of Grace against the Reformation

she was already pregnant, and any child born out of wedlock could not be king – male or not.

Anne was paraded through the streets of London in a grand ceremony; she sat upon swathes of fine cloth resting on two regal horses. She was crowned with St Edward's crown, a crown only worn previously by monarchs, perhaps indicating the male heir she was presumed to carry in her belly. Anne's family immediately felt the boons of their new powerful connection. Her father became Earl of Wiltshire, her cousin Earl of Ormond and even Mary, Henry's previous mistress, received an annual pension of £100. Spirits in the royal court were high, but beyond the palace gates the public were unconvinced. In their eyes not only had Anne ousted a beloved queen, but she was also responsible for the ripples created after the break with Rome; the people needed something stable to place their hopes in – they needed a male heir.

They would have to wait. On 7 September 1533 Anne gave birth, but it was not to the son she, Henry and everyone else had expected. It was a daughter. She was christened 'Elizabeth' in honour of Henry's mother, but this did little to comfort his disappointment. The documents were changed, the tournament that celebrated the birth of an heir cancelled and the people's discontent grew. Doubts also began to grow in Henry's mind; not only had Anne failed to produce the male heir she had promised him prior to their union, but also the qualities that had made the young Boleyn girl so enchanting and desirable as a mistress were proving unsuitable for the wife of a king.

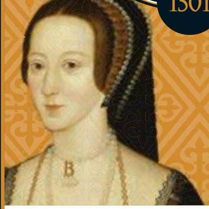
After being married to Catherine of Aragon for so long, Henry was used to having an obedient, reliable and submissive wife. Anne was anything but this. She would openly speak her mind and express opinions contrary to Henry's. Catherine had silently watched as Henry indulged himself with various mistresses beneath her nose, but Anne reacted with extreme jealousy toward any woman that got close to him, as she herself was aware how easily her husband's gaze could travel. He had sacrificed his faith and rocked the very foundations of the country for her, but now Henry was not so sure about Anne, and neither was anyone else.

The pressure on Anne at this point was immeasurable. She was already aware of Henry's affections toward Jane Seymour, one of her own ladies in waiting, and when Anne witnessed her wearing a locket with a portrait of Henry inside – a gift from the king – she tore it from Jane's neck with such force that her fingers bled. She was desperate to cling to power, not only for herself, but for the good of her family and her daughter, and her only chance of keeping a grasp on it relied on something completely out of her control. Sadly for Anne, the pressure upon her was not about to ease up, and she suffered a miscarriage in 1534, just one year into her tenure as queen. Fate itself seemed positioned against her when again in 1536 she miscarried another baby, this time a boy. For Henry, and many others, there was more than fate at work here, and he accused Anne of seducing him with spells. The fact she was unable to bear a healthy son was, apparently, further proof that Anne was cursed. Considering the public's already poor opinion of her, it would not take much for them to believe that Anne was a harbinger of ill omens and quite possibly a witch sent to lead their king and country astray. Not only was she disobedient, fiery and opinionated, but she was also unable to produce a future king. Everyone was agreed – Anne needed to go.

As Anne recovered from her miscarriage, Thomas Cromwell, Henry's chief minister, set about plotting her downfall. Cromwell had his own reasons to fear the influence of Anne; the two had argued where the money from the dissolution

> Anne was a champion of the English translation of the *Bible*

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF ANNE BOLEYN



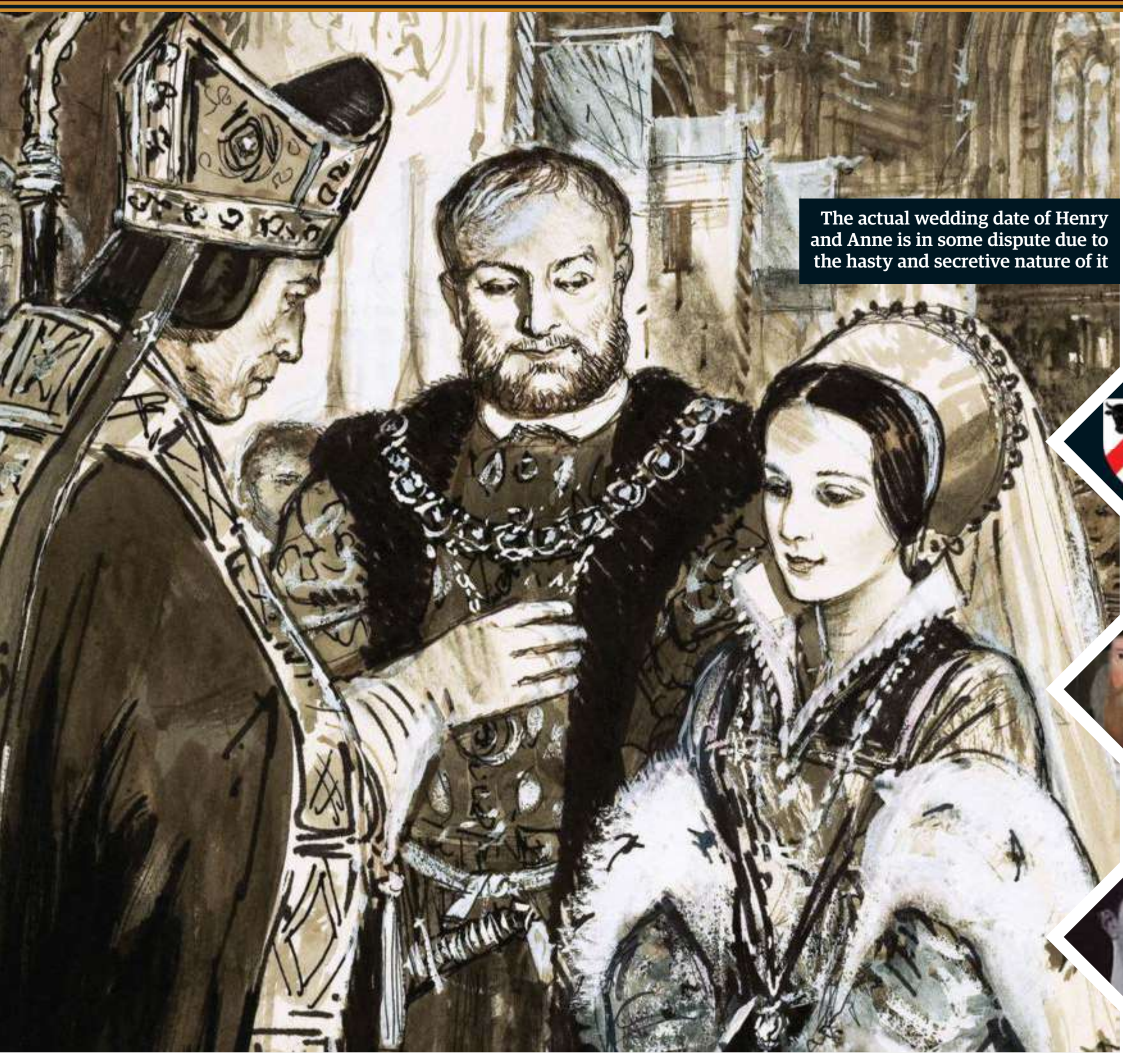
1501
Anne is born to Thomas Boleyn and Lady Elizabeth Howard, the second daughter born to the couple after Mary. The Boleyns are a very respected family of the English aristocracy. The date of Anne's birth is also argued to be 1507.

1513
Anne is sent abroad to receive an education in Europe and joins the schoolroom of Margaret of Austria. Here she learns all the skills expected of a Tudor noblewoman, such as horseback riding, dancing, singing and writing.

1515
Anne becomes maid of honour to Queen Claude of France. Here she develops many of the skills that will later impress the king, such as art, fashion, etiquette and most importantly, the game of courtly love.

1522
Anne's father summons her back to England to marry James Butler to settle a dispute over land and titles. The marriage arrangements come to a sudden halt, possibly because Thomas Boleyn has a grander suitor in mind for his youngest daughter.

1522
Anne makes her debut at the Chateau Vert pageant. She attracts the attention of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Henry Percy. She later secretly betroths Percy, but it is cut off by his father and Anne enters into the service of Catherine of Aragon.



The actual wedding date of Henry and Anne is in some dispute due to the hasty and secretive nature of it

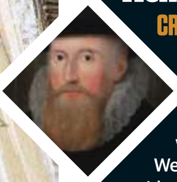
HEADLESS HALL OF FAME

George Boleyn

CRIME: INCEST, TREASON
DATE OF EXECUTION: 17 MAY 1536

Anne's brother George was charged with incest with the queen and plotting to kill the king. It is likely this was a plot devised by Thomas Cromwell to rid Henry of Anne. Despite no evidence against him he was found guilty and beheaded with the four other men.

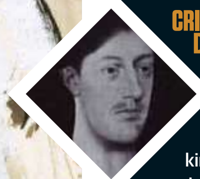
Henry Norris



CRIME: TREASON, ADULTERY
DATE OF EXECUTION: 17 MAY 1536

Norris served as groom of the stool to Henry VIII and was close to both the king and queen. The dates he was charged with adultery would be nigh-on impossible, as Anne was not in Westminster at the time. Norris was found guilty and said very little on the scaffold as he met his death.

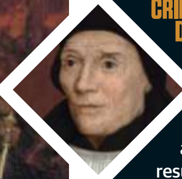
Francis Weston



CRIME: TREASON, ADULTERY
DATE OF EXECUTION: 17 MAY 1536

Weston served as a gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Henry VIII, and became a friend of the king. Aged 25, Weston was arrested for adultery with Anne and plotting to kill the king, despite no evidence supporting this. Weston protested his innocence to the end but was executed.

John Fisher



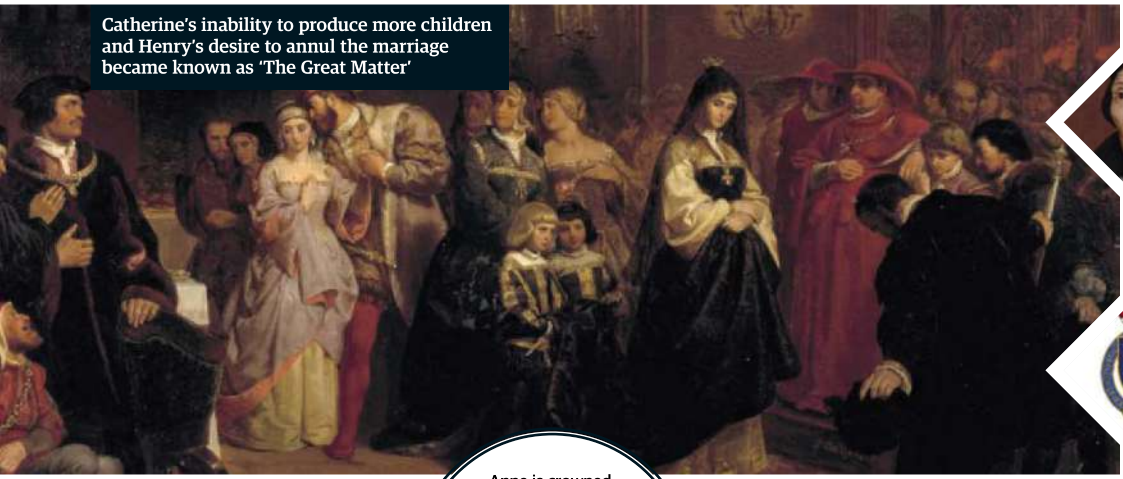
CRIME: TREASON
DATE OF EXECUTION: 22 JUNE 1535

Born in Yorkshire, John Fisher was a Roman-Catholic bishop who supported Catherine of Aragon when Henry VIII attempted to divorce her. Fisher refused to accept the king as head of the church and was beheaded as a result. Today Fisher is considered a saint.

Thomas Darcy

CRIME: HIGH TREASON
DATE OF EXECUTION: 30 JUNE 1537

An English nobleman, Darcy was opposed to Henry's dissolution of the monasteries and helped lead the popular uprising the Pilgrimage of Grace. "The most serious of all Tudor rebellions" saw 30,000 people in Yorkshire rise up against the religious reforms.



Catherine's inability to produce more children and Henry's desire to annul the marriage became known as 'The Great Matter'

Henry VIII loses interest in Anne's sister, Mary, and begins to court Anne. He sends her a series of love letters, but Anne refuses to be his mistress. Within a year Henry asks Anne to marry him and she accepts.

1526

Anne is crowned queen consort, after years of fighting for an annulment of the marriage of Henry and Catherine. Anne is already pregnant with Elizabeth and in September of that year she is born, much to Henry's disappointment.

1533

The relationship between Anne and Henry becomes strained as Anne suffers a miscarriage. By the time she falls pregnant again in 1535, Henry is already courting Jane Seymour. Anne also miscarries this child, who appears to be male.

1534

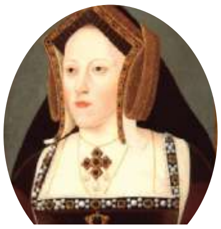
Various men are arrested on charges of adultery with Anne and treason against the king in a plot masterminded by Thomas Cromwell. Anne is taken to the Tower of London, tried and found guilty of adultery, incest and high treason.

1536

Anne is executed on a scaffold by a French swordsman brought in especially for the beheading. Before her death she praises Henry, perhaps to save Elizabeth and her family from any further implications, but refuses to admit her guilt.

1536

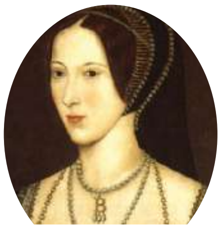
WIFE HEAD-TO-HEADLESS



Catherine of Aragon

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
1509-1533
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
DIVORCED

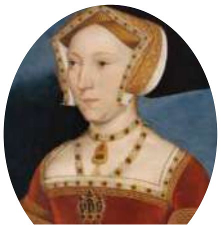
Catherine was first married to Arthur, Henry's older brother, but was betrothed to Henry after his death. Catherine had a string of failed pregnancies and finally gave birth to a healthy daughter in 1516 – Mary. Although Henry seemed to adore Catherine, the marriage was annulled on the basis that she had been his brother's wife.



Anne Boleyn

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
1533-1536
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
BEHEADED

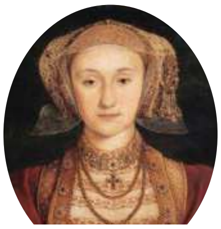
Clever, pretty and witty, Anne soon attracted Henry's attention as the handmaiden of Catherine of Aragon. She refused to become a mistress and demanded he wed her. This led Henry to seek a divorce and start the English Reformation. Although Anne produced the would-be heir, Elizabeth, her failure to produce a son had Henry plot her downfall.



Jane Seymour

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
1536-1537
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
DIED AFTER GIVING BIRTH

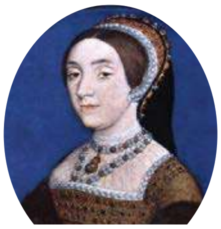
It is highly likely that Jane Seymour was the mistress who disposed of Anne, and Seymour married Henry shortly after Anne's execution. Although she was the lowest in birth of Henry's wives, her giving Henry his much-desired male heir, Edward, secured his everlasting love. She died from post-natal complications and Henry was later buried next to her.



Anne of Cleves

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
6 JANUARY 1540 - 9 JULY 1540
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
DIVORCED

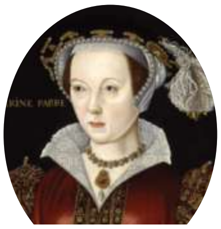
A German princess, Anne was selected by Henry from nothing more than a portrait. Henry asked the artist to paint Anne realistically, and not to flatter her. However, when Henry met her he was greatly disappointed and was not enthusiastic about the marriage. The marriage provided a vital alliance with the Germans, but was later annulled.



Catherine Howard

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
1540-1541
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
BEHEADED

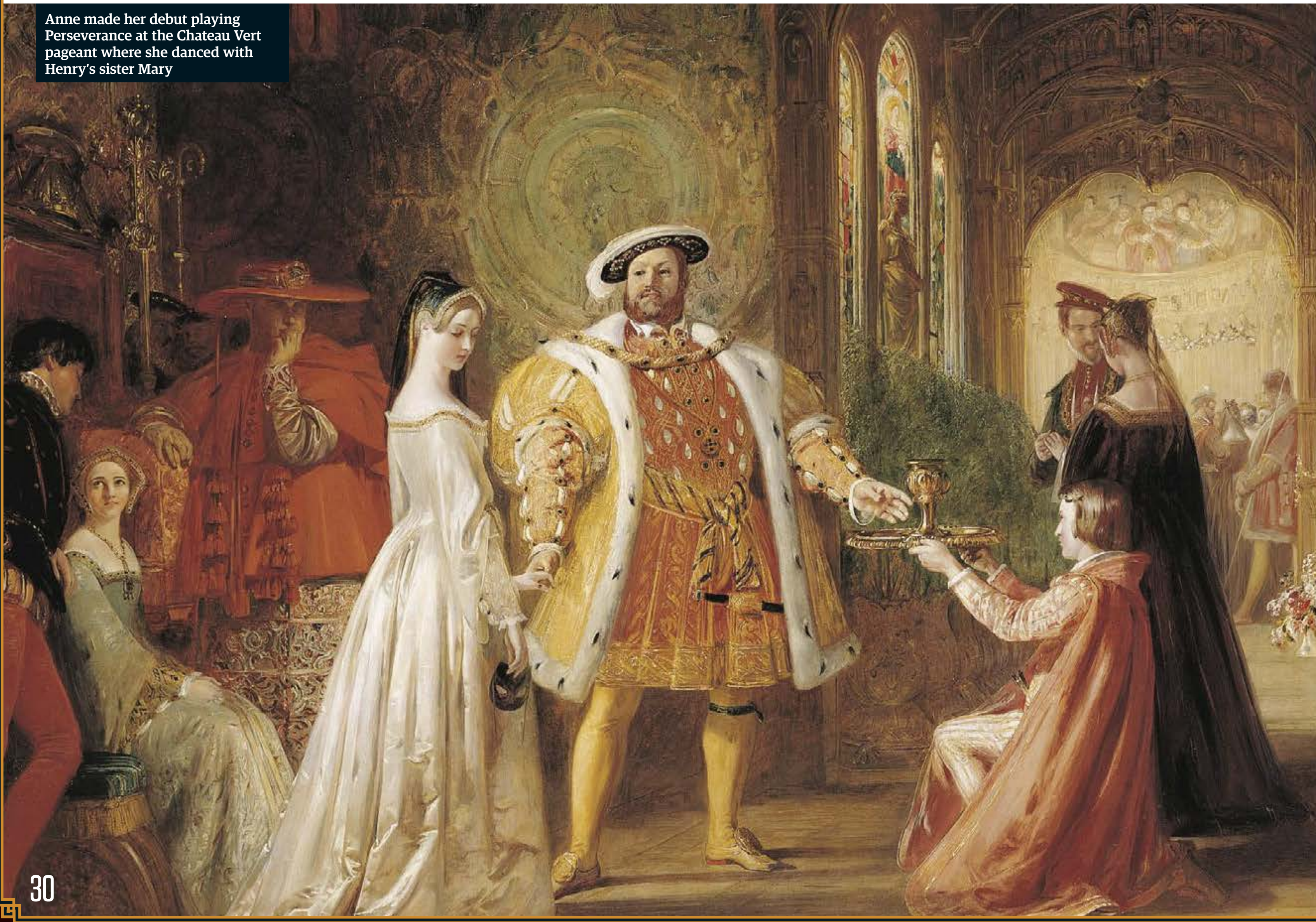
Referred to by Henry as his "rose without a thorn", the young and pretty woman quickly caught the king's eye and the two were soon married. However, in early-1941 Howard allegedly embarked upon an affair with Henry's male courtier, Thomas Culpepper. Howard was charged with treason and adultery, found guilty and executed.



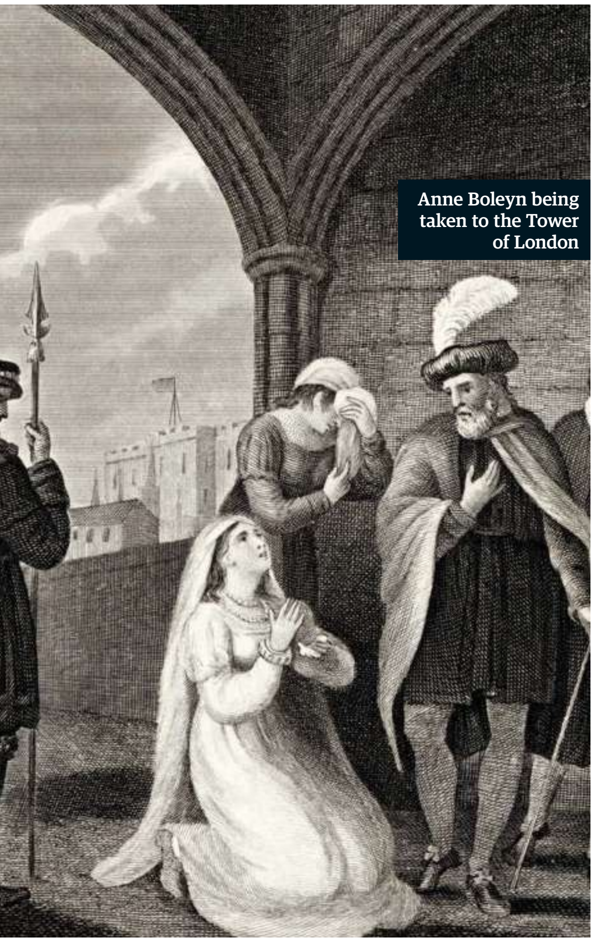
Catherine Parr

DATES OF MARRIAGE:
1543-1547
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
SURVIVED

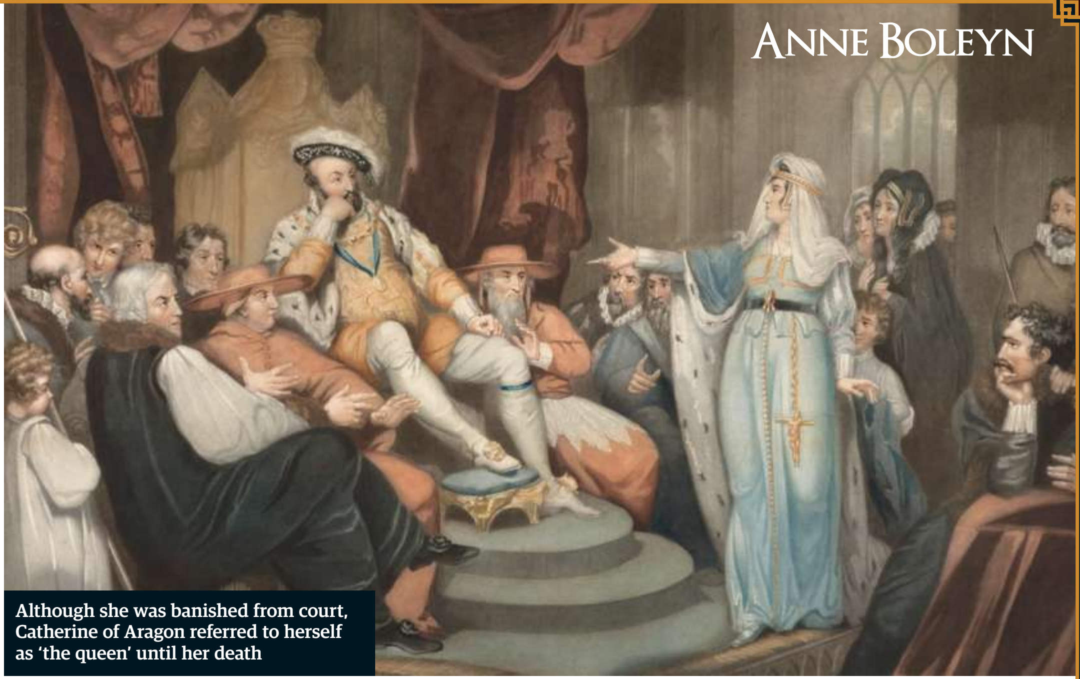
Having had four husbands of which Henry was the third, Catherine Parr was the most married queen in English history. Her friendship with Henry's daughter Mary caused her to catch the king's attention. As queen, Catherine worked to restore Henry's court as a family home, and helped strengthen the Tudor line, thereby ensuring Elizabeth's eventual succession.



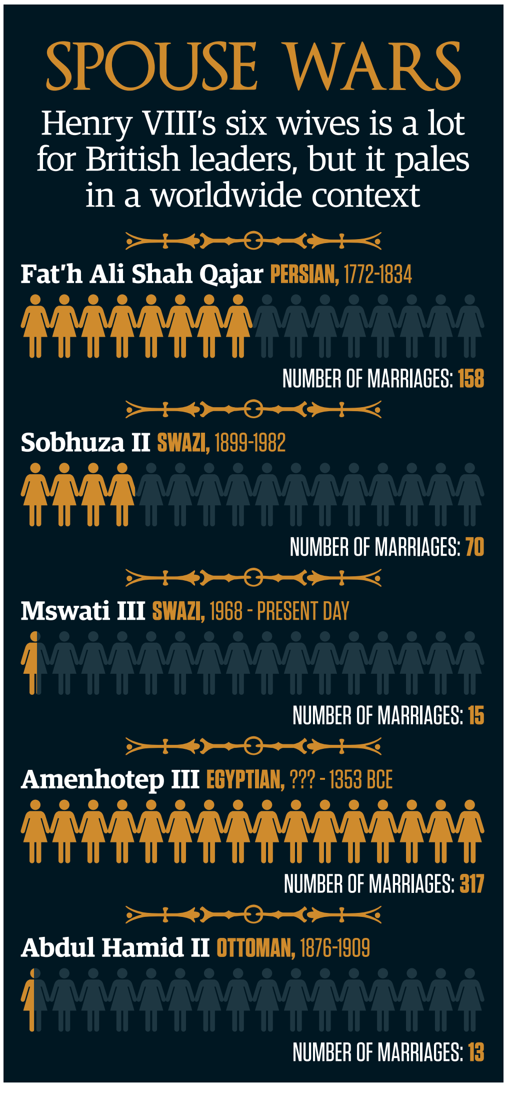
Anne made her debut playing Perseverance at the Chateau Vert pageant where she danced with Henry's sister Mary



Anne Boleyn being taken to the Tower of London



Although she was banished from court, Catherine of Aragon referred to herself as 'the queen' until her death



SPOUSE WARS

Henry VIII's six wives is a lot for British leaders, but it pales in a worldwide context

Fat'h Ali Shah Qajar PERSIAN, 1772-1834

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES: 158

Sobhuza II SWAZI, 1899-1982

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES: 70

Mswati III SWAZI, 1968 - PRESENT DAY

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES: 15

Amenhotep III EGYPTIAN, ??? - 1353 BCE

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES: 317

Abdul Hamid II OTTOMAN, 1876-1909

NUMBER OF MARRIAGES: 13

of the monasteries should go, and he had seen where Anne had sent her other enemies, such as Thomas More - to the chopping block. Under Henry's instructions, Cromwell began to investigate a variety of adulterous accusations against Anne and arrested Mark Smeaton, a court musician. Mark confessed to the charges, very likely under torture, and gave the names of a selection of other men under the same charges, including Anne's own brother - George.

Anne was far from blind to what was going on; she was very aware of what these investigations meant for herself. In April 1536, just before Smeaton was arrested, Anne came to Henry carrying the young Elizabeth in her arms and appealed to him directly. However, it seemed that her power over him had finally been extinguished. On 1 May Henry left the Mayday jousts without saying goodbye to Anne, and the following day she was arrested - it would be the final time she would ever see her husband.

In a cruel twist of irony, Anne's prison cell was the very same place in the Tower of London that she had resided on her coronation night. For Anne, a woman for whom control had always been of vital importance, the hopelessness of her situation had a profound effect. Within a day of imprisonment her state of mind differed from optimism and giddiness, to bouts of hysteria and extreme depression. The queen would sob uncontrollably one moment, then burst into shocking laughter the next. Her enemies were very cunning with the methods in which they condemned Anne; four of the men were tried and found guilty of adultery and treason before her own trial took place, making it nigh-on impossible for her to prove her innocence.

Anne was forced to stand before a council of peers including her once-love Henry Percy and her own uncle in the very same room she had enjoyed her coronation feast. There was very little evidence against Anne or any of the men accused, but the king had made his will known. When the verdict was announced, Anne collapsed and had to be carried out of the courtroom. Guilty. She had been condemned to death.

On 17 May, the five condemned men were executed, including Anne's beloved younger brother, and on 19 May Anne herself was led to the scaffold. Her marriage to the king had already been deemed invalid, and he was not present to witness the final moments of the woman who had captivated him for so many years. Anne's body was buried in an unmarked grave in the Chapel of St Peter, which adjoined the Tower Green.

For the surviving Boleyns, the fall was so great they could not hope to recover from it. Anne's mother, Elizabeth, died a year later and she was soon followed by her husband. Mary died in 1542, leaving behind only a young daughter and the son that may have been Henry's. Less than eight years after Anne's coronation every immediate member of the Boleyn family was dead. Their rise had been magnificent, their fall akin to a Greek tragedy.

> The legend that Anne had a sixth finger on her hand was likely a vicious rumour

The future for Henry was almost as stormy. 11 years and four wives later, Henry's greed and debauched lifestyle finally got the better of him and he died aged 55. The handsome, athletic and charismatic young man that he had wished to portray himself as had faded long ago, and the portrait of a lustful, violent and egotistical king remained. Although he had finally produced the son he was so obsessed with obtaining, the young Edward VI died aged just 15.

But unbeknownst to him, he had already produced the strong, long-lasting heir he desired. Elizabeth, the daughter Anne had borne who he had been so disappointed with, went on to rule England for 45 years. She became one of the most famed and celebrated rulers in the nation's history, and Henry and Anne's most enduring legacy.

© Look & Learn, Alamy

Heroes & Villains

Mary I of England

The first legitimate queen of England, Mary I was a devout Catholic whose love for her nation became lost in a bloody legacy

Written by Dom Reseigh-Lincoln

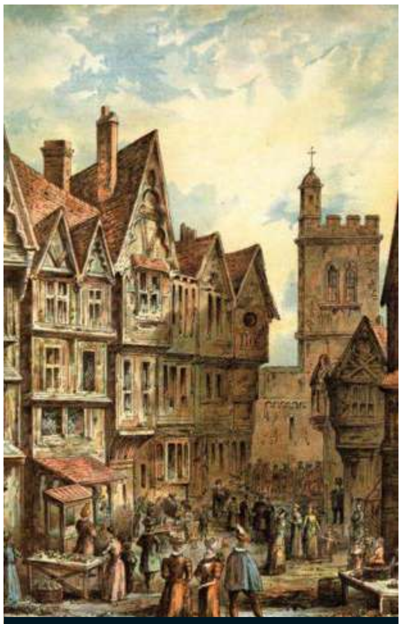
Of all the dynasties to rule over England and its territories, few made as strong a mark as the House of Tudor. Mary I, the first true female monarch to ever take the English throne, was no exception. The eldest daughter of Henry VIII, Mary Tudor was a woman - and a queen - defined by the turbulent religious metamorphosis England was experiencing in the early-16th century. In a time when religion and politics became inextricably intertwined, Mary would become a monarch so driven by her beliefs that she'd murder her own subjects in order to restore the sanctity of her own queendom. But who was the woman behind the name 'Bloody Mary'? Was she really a blood-drunk tyrant? Or a product of a country divided by the distinctions of its faith?

The answers find their roots in her early years. Born on 18 February 1516, Mary was the daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Henry, a man not to be denied any desire, desperately wanted a son and heir to secure the House of Tudor's hold on the English throne. However, a series of miscarriages and the birth of a daughter only served to push the king further away from his Spanish queen. His pursuit of Catherine's maid of honour, Anne Boleyn, when Mary was around ten years old, would push Catherine further out of favour with Henry's court and the young princess along with her.

In early-1533, something happened that few could have predicted. Determined to take Anne Boleyn as his wife and enraged at the Pope's refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine on the grounds it was unlawful in the eyes of God, Henry defied Rome and ended Papal authority over the English crown. Henry then appointed himself supreme head of the English Church, deemed his union to Catherine void and announced his betrothal to Anne Boleyn. As a result Catherine was stripped of her title as queen and demoted to Dowager Princess of Wales, while Mary lost her princess status and instead gained the title 'The Lady Mary'. With her mother's marriage to the king in ruins, Mary was deemed illegitimate, killing her position as heir apparent dead in its tracks.

> Throughout her life, Mary was an avid gambler. Records of her personal accounts show she regularly bet money on card games

The year 1536 was another eventful time for Lady Mary. After three years of refusing to accept Henry as the supreme head of the Church of England, Catherine passed away on 7 January. A few months later, tired of his second wife's inability to provide him with a son, Henry had Anne disgraced and eventually executed for a multitude of crimes. That year also saw the Pilgrimage of Grace, a political movement in the north of England that demanded the Act of Supremacy be repealed and Mary be reinstated as heir. The rebellion came to nothing thanks to the king's merciless reaction, but it proved that Mary would always serve as a figurehead for loyal papist plotters.



London's population quadrupled between 1500 and 1600, resulting in overcrowding

Life in the time of Mary I

Irish settlement

Mary continued the Tudor conquest of Ireland by establishing a number of English settlements. These were placed in the Irish Midlands, effectively creating the King and Queen's Counties. Two main towns were established during this period, Maryborough and Philipstown.

Rainy season

In something of an ironic turn, the five years of her rule were uncharacteristically rainy. Persistent rain for months on end led to over-saturated soil, which in turn ruined entire crops. This with damage from flooding plunged the country into famine.

A strained economy

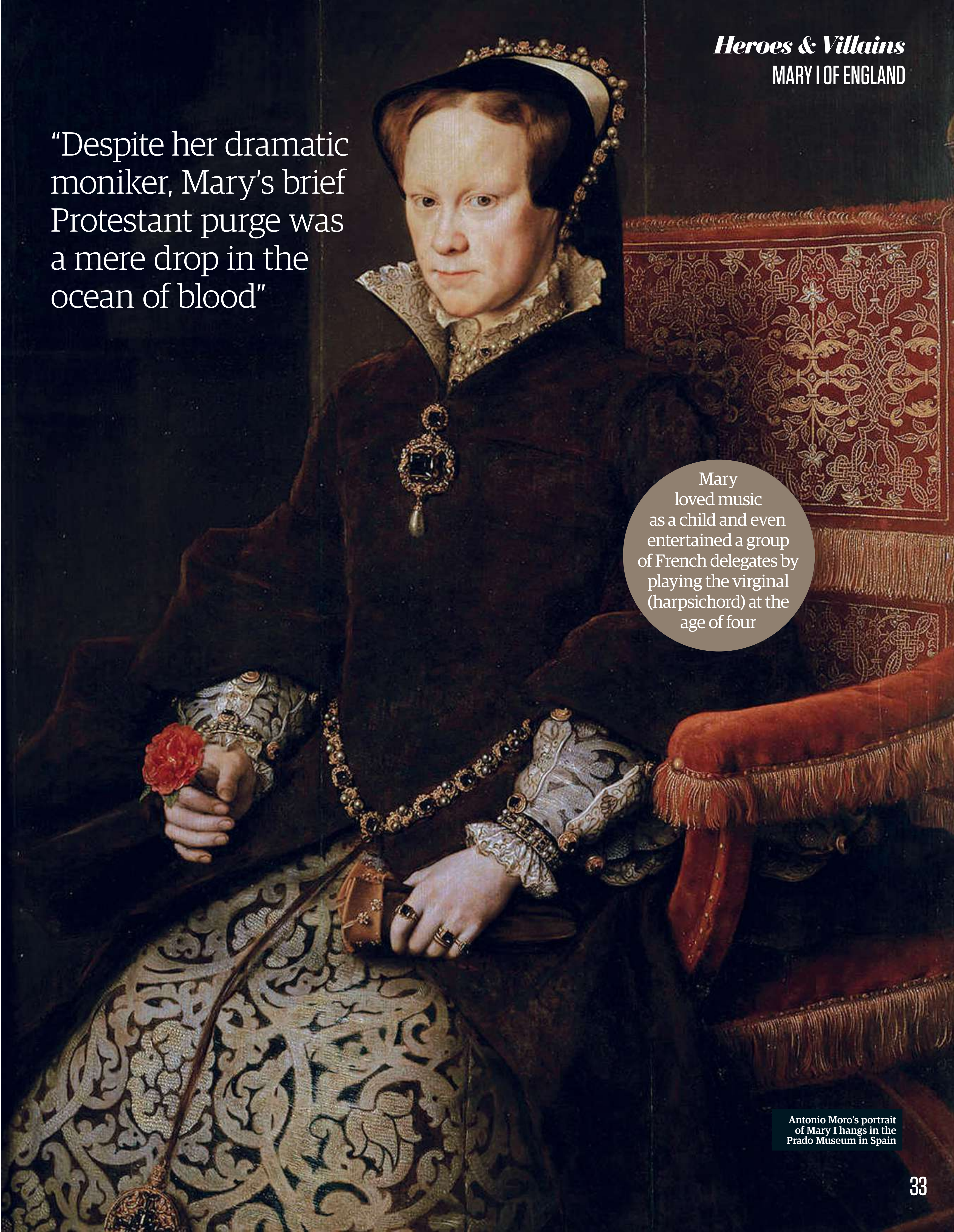
The weather and destroyed harvests contributed to an already strained economic climate. Despite the union in marriage between England and Spain, trade between the countries was brittle at best, with Spain reluctant to include England in its lucrative hold on the New World.

Fiscal reform

For all the negativity associated with her rule, Mary did attempt to make changes to the state of English currency. Prior to Mary's reign, sheriffs had failed to adequately enforce and collect import taxes, so Mary had new legislation drawn up that clearly defined new rules for efficiently taking incoming resources.

Monastic restoration

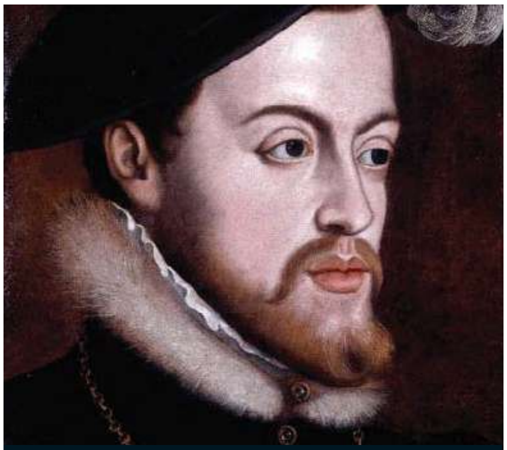
While the lands confiscated in Henry VIII's Reformation were not reclaimed by the crown, Mary was determined to rebuild the destitute monasteries. She did not force her subjects to take part in such a vision, but used her own finances to restore a number of sites across the nation.



"Despite her dramatic moniker, Mary's brief Protestant purge was a mere drop in the ocean of blood"

Mary loved music as a child and even entertained a group of French delegates by playing the virginal (harpsichord) at the age of four

Antonio Moro's portrait of Mary I hangs in the Prado Museum in Spain



Mary's husband Philip of Spain cared little for her and spent little time in England

War with France

In January 1556, Mary's husband, Prince Philip of Spain, became King Philip II following his father's abdication. The Spanish monarch rarely visited Mary in England, but when he landed on English soil in March 1557 he came seeking Mary's support for Spain's war with France. Mary, keen to preserve ties with such a powerful Catholic nation, was in favour of joining the conflict, but Mary's closest allies persuaded her to hold off due to a wave of bad harvests and a tattered economy that Mary inherited from her brother's reign.

When Thomas Stafford, who had already caused Mary's administration considerable frustration with a rebellion in 1554, invaded England in June with the financial backing of France's King Henry II, everything changed. The rebellion was put down fairly easily but it convinced Mary to commit to Philip's campaign. The commitment was a political and financial disaster for England. Not only did it place strain on the relationship with England and Rome (since the Pope Paul IV was allied with the French monarch), it also led to the loss of Calais, the last territory England controlled on the mainland of Europe. It was a terrible ideological blow for the country – so much so that Mary was quoted as saying: "When I am dead and opened, you shall find Calais lying in my heart."

Mary attempted to create some distance between herself and the marital affairs of her father in the years that followed, but Mary remained the trump card of many a Catholic plot, including a supposed attempted marriage to Reginald Pole, an English cardinal who would eventually serve as Archbishop of Canterbury under Mary's own reign. Mary enjoyed something of a better relationship with her father's sixth and final wife, Catherine Parr. Parr did her best to repair Mary and the king's relationship, with Henry eventually signing the Act of Succession 1544, which restored both Mary and Elizabeth as his heirs.

When Jane Seymour was pregnant with Edward, Mary sent her cucumbers to help with her cravings

As Mary grew in years, her dedication to her faith never wavered. Like many, she was forced to openly accept the king as her supreme ruler, but in secret her Catholic faith never wavered. When Henry died in 1547 his only son Edward VI became king, and England was launched into even stricter Protestant reform. As much a puppet for his guardians as he was a devout Anglican, Henry VIII's long-sought male heir clashed regularly with Mary. The two rarely spent time together but when they did, the 15-year-old king was exasperated with his sister's barely-veiled Roman Catholicism. When Edward passed away from what was most likely tuberculosis on 9 July 1553, Mary's right as heir apparent was struck another body blow when Edward defied the Act of Succession and named Lady Jane Grey, the daughter-in-law of one of his guardians, as his rightful heir.

Edward had invited Mary to visit him at his bedside, but Mary's advisors warned her that it was most likely a trap to imprison her, so she fled to the pro-Catholic county of East Anglia.

With public support slipping following Grey's ascension, Mary and her allies amassed a sizable military force at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk and eventually marched on London and deposed Grey and her supporters. On 1 October Mary was crowned Queen Mary I of England, and with the power of the throne at her fingertips, Mary was ready to finally right the wrongs of her brother and father.

Now that she was queen, there was the matter of finding a husband who provided the right political stability for England. Keen to return England to its former Catholic self, Mary became engaged to Prince Philip of Spain, the son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and heir to the Spanish throne. The union was far from amorous, but it was the first move that tied England to the Roman Catholic territories in Europe. As England's first queen regnant – a queen made monarch by inheritance, not by marriage – the terms of the marriage were also amended to ensure that Mary's authority could never be usurped by her husband. Mary and Philip were married on 25 July 1554, a mere two days after meeting in person for the first time.

"Mary demonstrated that a woman could rule in her own right"

Timeline

1516

A princess is born
Daughter of King Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, princess Mary is born at the Palace of Placentia in Greenwich, London. She is the first of many pregnancies that doesn't end in miscarriage for the queen.
18 February 1516

Mary is betrothed
In order to establish stable ties with France, Henry betroths the two-year-old princess to the dauphin of France, the infant son of the French king, Francis I. Despite the potential strength of the arrangement, it falls apart three years later.
1518

Another engagement ensues
With the potential marriage to the French king's young son in tatters, Henry is still determined to use his daughter as a pawn in another political alliance. Now six years old, Mary is betrothed to marry her second cousin, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. This too falls apart a few years later.
1522

Princess of Wales
Mary is sent to the Welsh border to preside over the Council of Wales and the Marches. She is only there to represent the king while his courtiers preside for her. She is referred to as the Princess of Wales at this time, but is never officially granted the title by the king.
1525

Defining moment

Act of Supremacy
November 1534

Mary's father, Henry VIII, grows tired of bowing to the will of papal authority in Rome. When Pope Clement VII refuses to grant Henry an annulment for his marriage to Mary's mother, the king has Cardinal Wolsey and Parliament draw up a new act that proclaims the monarch to be, "the only supreme head on Earth of the Church of England." By breaking away from Rome, Henry begins a systematic Reformation that drains monasteries of funds and lands and secures Anglicanism as the one true faith in the kingdom.

Act of Succession
After the ageing king marries Catherine Parr, his sixth and final wife, he finally relents to the idea of restoring his two daughters to the line of succession behind his son Edward. The Act of Succession 1544 effectively revokes Mary's illegitimacy.
14 July 1543

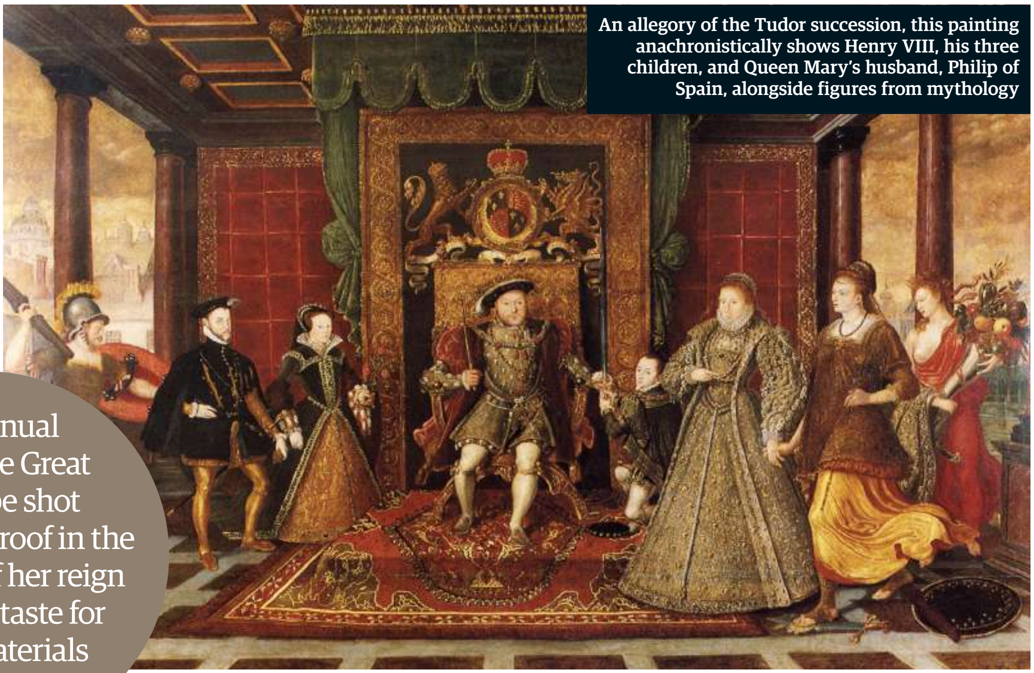
Mary proclaimed queen
Following the death of her brother King Edward VI, Mary has his named successor, Lady Jane Grey, imprisoned in the Tower of London after nine days of rule. Citing the Act of Succession, Mary is proclaimed the new monarch.
19 July 1553

Yet organising a political alliance with a powerful Catholic nation was no mean feat considering Mary had inherited a Protestant kingdom. Charles V and Prince Philip needed reassurance that England was indeed committed to restoring the old ways. Mary's English Counter-Reformation began almost immediately with her first Parliament in October deeming the marriage of her late parents valid while passing the First Statute of Repeal, which essentially redacted all the religious legislation enacted during her brother's tenure. Her father's Act of Supremacy was also rejected with religious authority removed from the crown and returned to Rome.

These changes were largely a popular move since England had only been a Protestant nation for six years, but such legislative restoration also came with a sting in the tail: the Heresy Acts. These acts deemed anyone practising any faith other than Roman Catholicism a heretic by proxy, leading to the voluntary exile of over 800 nobles who refused to renounce their new faith. The Heresy Acts decreed heretics should be put to death by beheading or by being hung, drawn and quartered, while the use of burning was also adopted. Over the course of five years, 287 Protestants were burned at the stake, creating an air of aggressive persecution that would make 'Catholicism' synonymous with the word 'persecution' for centuries to come.

> The annual cost of the Great Wardrobe shot through the roof in the early part of her reign due to her taste for lavish materials and dresses

So was Mary really the bloodiest monarch of the Tudor line? Despite her dramatic moniker, Mary's brief Protestant purge was a mere drop in the ocean of blood spilled by her predecessors. Edward VI had 5,500 rebels murdered in the Prayer Book Rebellion in 1549, while Henry VIII executed 72,000 people – including two of his own wives – in his three decades of rule. It was more the stark ultraviolence of her executions during a time when Reformist and Counter-Reformist propaganda was flying around Europe that gave her actions such a lasting infamy.


An allegory of the Tudor succession, this painting anachronistically shows Henry VIII, his three children, and Queen Mary's husband, Philip of Spain, alongside figures from mythology

Mary's reign only lasted five years, and while it's easy to assume the mass burnings of Protestants and the largely disastrous alliance with Spain – which even led to the loss of Calais to France in one of the Tudor dynasty's most embarrassing military debacles – Mary did attempt to make some changes that ultimately benefited the kingdom. She readdressed the way the government collected taxes, including the normalisation of import tax. She even used Philip's reluctance to include England in Spain's grip on the lucrative trade with the New World to create new trade opportunities with the east coast of Africa.

By the time of her death on 17 November 1558, Mary's attempts to restore England to its Catholic roots had left the country in religious and political turmoil. But for all acts of papal reform, Mary appears to have loved her kingdom deeply. By all accounts, it seems likely her mass burning of Protestants wasn't born out of hatred for these men and women, but out of an enduring passion to see England's religious integrity restored.

Mary is crowned
After riding into London in August with her half-sister and 800 supporting nobles, Mary releases the Duke of Norfolk, Stephen Gardiner, and makes him Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor. She is crowned by Gardiner at Westminster Abbey.
1 October 1553

Marriage to Prince Philip
Less than a week after dealing with the conspiracy to place Lady Jane Grey on the English throne, Mary marries the Prince Philip, the son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Such a marriage blocks her Protestant half-sister's position as heir.
25 July 1554

The false pregnancy
Around September 1554 Mary's menstruation cycle stops – she begins gaining weight as well as dealing with bouts of nausea. Mary takes this as a sign of pregnancy, but her belly recedes more than a year later. It was a phantom pregnancy.
Sep 1554 – Oct 1555

Burning Protestants
At the beginning of 1555, the restoration of Roman Catholicism in England leads to the return of the Heresy Acts. With religious doctrine on her side Mary begins executing Protestant nobles. Burning at the stake is the most prevalent with 286 Protestants executed in the purge.
February 1555

Defining moment
England drawn into war
March 1557

In January 1556, Prince Philip's father Charles V abdicates from the throne, making Philip the new king. Often absent from Mary's side for long periods, the new Spanish monarch finally returns to England in March 1557. Philip has reignited the war with France – following a brittle peace treaty between the two – and is keen to use his alliance with England to bolster his forces. War is officially declared in June, but the conflict causes strain with the papacy as Rome has political ties to the French king. The conflict is a political and economic disaster and leads to the loss of Calais in January 1558.

1558

Defining moment
The queen is dead
17 November 1558

In 1557, Mary suffers another phantom pregnancy and the queen is forced to make *the* defining decision of her reign. In 1558 she names Elizabeth as her successor, a brief but important example of how Mary can swing from zealous crusader to loving sister. Mary falls ill during an influenza pandemic that is gripping London. It's not known whether it is the influenza that takes her life, or ongoing complications with ovarian cysts and uterine cancer.

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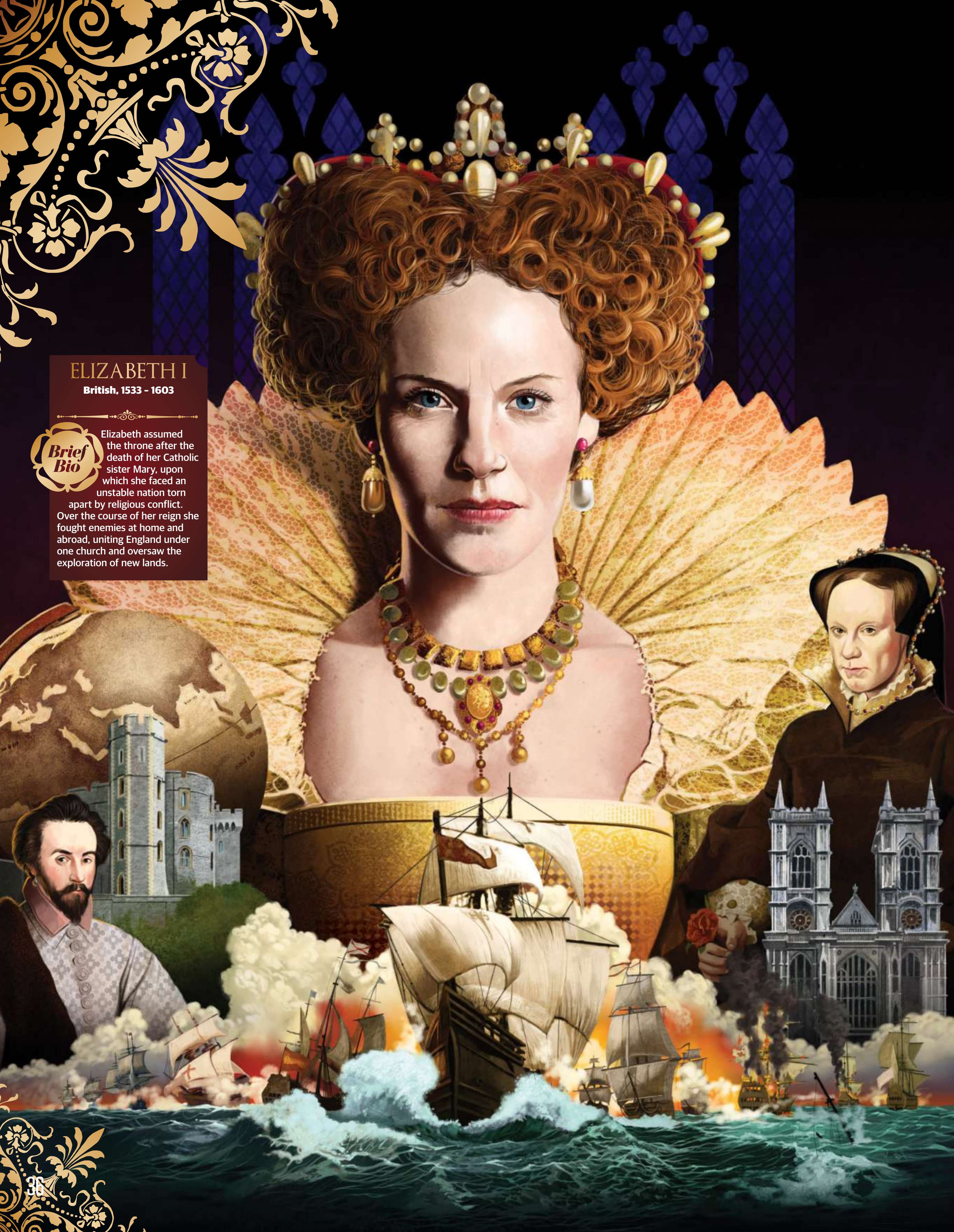


ELIZABETH I

British, 1533 – 1603

Brief Bio

Elizabeth assumed the throne after the death of her Catholic sister Mary, upon which she faced an unstable nation torn apart by religious conflict. Over the course of her reign she fought enemies at home and abroad, uniting England under one church and oversaw the exploration of new lands.

THE TURBULENT REIGN OF ELIZABETH

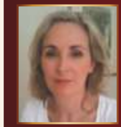
She fought off foreign invasions and domestic rebellions but did she really preside over a golden age?

Written by Jonathan Hatfull

In 1588, against the advice of her most trusted aides, Elizabeth I rode out on her grey gelding to address her troops gathered at Tilbury in Essex in preparation of repelling the expected invasion force of the Spanish Armada. Looking out at the assembled faces before her, she delivered a speech that would go down in history and for many would forever define her: "I know I have the body of a weak, feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king – and of a king of England too."

The speech would have to be transcribed and redistributed for the soldiers who were unable to hear the Queen but they had all seen their monarch, armoured and on her steed, ready to stand by them to repel the Catholic invasion. This image of Elizabeth has been the key to our popular perception of her for centuries, but there's much more to her. Elizabeth was cunning and capricious, but she could be blinded by affection,

LEANDA DE LISLE



De Lisle is the author of numerous books including *After Elizabeth* and *The Sisters Who Would Be Queen*, which was a top ten best-seller. Her latest book is *Tudor; The Family Story* and is published by Chatto and is available now.

if only temporarily. She was tremendously clever, with an almost unfailing sense of what her people wanted or needed from her, but had to see off foreign invasion attempts and homegrown rebellions. While she was sitting on the throne of England the country became acquainted with some of its greatest triumphs and darkest hours.

When Elizabeth came to the throne in November 1558, the whole of Europe was on tenterhooks. How would the new Protestant queen follow the reign of her Catholic sister Mary? With an unstable nation and conspiracies at home and abroad, the situation required diplomacy, intelligence and bravery; three qualities of which Elizabeth had always had in ample supply. In fact, the unstable situation was nothing new to her; Elizabeth's position had been precarious from the moment she was born. The daughter of Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, she was immediately deemed as illegitimate by any Catholic nations, who regarded the king's divorce of Catherine of Aragon as illegal. In their eyes, Catherine's daughter Mary was the only rightful heir to the throne.

Although both parents had been desperate for a boy, Anne would be a doting mother to her infant child, but she was sent to the executioner's block in 1536 after failing to produce a male heir for her king. Although Henry's third wife Jane Seymour was kind to Elizabeth and Mary, she had her own child to attend to with the birth of her son and Henry's heir, Edward. Henry himself would not see much of Elizabeth until 1542, when he decided the time had come to reacquaint himself with his young daughter. He found her to be intelligent and charming, and decided that he would reinstate both Mary and Elizabeth back into his lineage.

In 1543, Henry married Catherine Parr, his last wife, and relations within the royal family warmed, as Mary took a maternal interest in young Edward, while Elizabeth enjoyed a sisterly relationship with both. However, when Edward took the throne upon their father's death, cracks started to form. First, Elizabeth had to contend with the amorous attentions of Catherine's new husband Thomas Seymour, which caused a scandal at court in 1548. Seymour's intentions were seen as treasonous, and Elizabeth was

"SHE WAS TREMENDOUSLY CLEVER, WITH AN ALMOST UNFAILING SENSE OF WHAT HER PEOPLE WANTED, OR NEEDED FROM HER"

HOW GOOD WAS ELIZABETH AT BALANCING THE BOOKS?

While the popular image is that Mary left England in a sorry state, Leanda de Lisle explains that Elizabeth's fiscal behaviour was far from immaculate. Mary left England £227,000 in debt, while her sister produced debts of £350,000. "Mary's reign was not a 'disaster'. The popular image of Mary – always 'Bloody Mary', rarely Mary I – has been greatly influenced by a combination of sexual and religious prejudice," explains De Lisle: "Mary I had named Elizabeth as her heir, despite her personal feelings towards her sister, and so allowed the crown to be inherited peacefully. Elizabeth continued to refuse to name anyone. In 1562, believing she was dying, she asked for Robert Dudley to be made Lord Protector with an income of £20,000." Elizabeth was notoriously reluctant to engage in warfare because of its costs and risk, but the Spanish conflict dragged on for years, while she awarded monopolies to her favourites at court and crops failed. "While we remember Elizabeth's success in repelling the Armada in 1588," says De Lisle, "We forget that the war continued and impoverished the country and the crown, a situation made worse by the corruption of court officials including notorious high-ranking figures such as Robert Cecil. People starved in the 1590s and the elite even began to fear possible revolution."

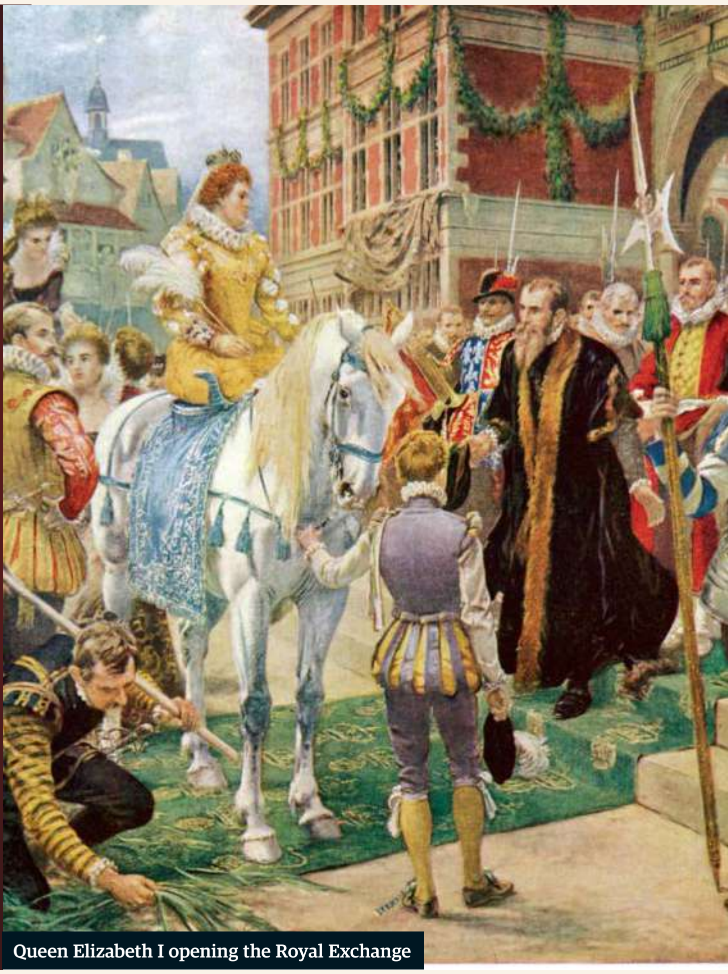
VERDICT

Elizabeth was forced to deal with circumstances beyond her control, such as poor harvests and an ongoing conflict with Spain, but the fact is that she was not the financial marvel many believe her to be.

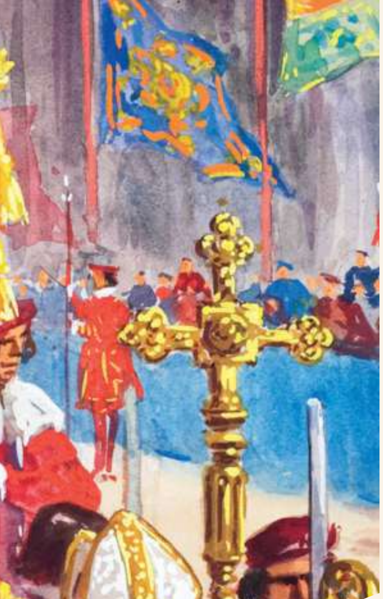
BORROWING MONEY IN THE 16TH CENTURY

Before the English merchant Thomas Gresham came to prominence, the Tudors had borrowed money from the great European banks such as the Antwerp Exchange. However, these banks charged a high interest rate and it was generally acknowledged that going around Europe borrowing money did nothing to improve England's image as a serious power. Money could also be borrowed from independent merchants, such as Horatio Palavicino, who Elizabeth was forced to borrow money from late in her reign. Gresham had previously helped Edward VI rid himself of most of his debts and founded the Royal Exchange in 1571 to challenge the power of Antwerp.

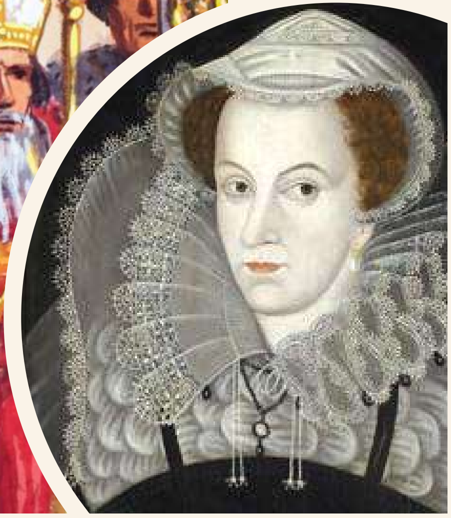
Now that Elizabeth could seek loans from within her realm, she was able to exert greater pressure to get what she wanted, while Parliament could grant her more funds if they wanted. Later in her reign, she began to use increasingly severe taxation, which contributed to her decreasing popularity.



Queen Elizabeth I opening the Royal Exchange



Picture depicting the coronation of Elizabeth I in 1558



Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots, who was executed after being found guilty of plotting against Elizabeth I

WAS A RELIGIOUS COMPROMISE MET?

The Church of England was one of compromise and middle ground. While she herself was a Protestant, she didn't hold the puritanical beliefs of some of her council members. She introduced the Act of Supremacy in 1558, which reaffirmed England's separation from Rome and established her as the head of the Church. Elizabeth understood the dangers of trying to impose religion and allowed Catholicism to continue, provided it took place in secret.

However, Leanna de Lisle reminds us that we should not forget Elizabeth's willingness to crack down when necessary. "Elizabeth's conservatism and pragmatism has seen her described as a religious moderate, in contrast to the 'fanatical' Mary," she explains. "But as the new Protestant queen of a largely Catholic country Elizabeth was necessarily moderate, and as her reign grew longer, she proved that, like Mary, she could be utterly ruthless when faced by a threat. The hundreds of executions of villagers following the Northern Rebellion far exceeded anything her predecessors had done in similar circumstances; her later persecution of Catholics was also relentless and cruel. It is a little-known fact that she also burned heretics – namely Anabaptists – these were far fewer in number than Mary's victims, but then there weren't that many Anabaptists!" She executed both Protestants and Catholics for publicly disobeying the laws of the Church of England. However, events in Europe show the English queen in a much more favourable light. Comparatively, Elizabeth was extremely tolerant. The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris showed the fervour with which Catholic Europeans detested Protestants. She was also much more tolerant than many of her advisors.

VERDICT

Elizabeth successfully found a moderate middle ground in a very turbulent time, but would crack down mercilessly if the rules she had laid down were broken.

VS

CATHOLIC	C of E
1 The services were held in Latin, countermanding the reformation's ideal that everyone should be able to understand. The English prayer book was banned.	1 The image of the minister became much simpler. They were not allowed to wear Roman Catholic vestments, such as the surplice.
2 Church furnishings were restored to their former lavish state and the buildings were now decorated completely with Catholic artwork.	2 All rood lofts, a screen portraying the crucifixion, a common feature in Catholic churches, were removed. The Pope was not the head of the church.
3 Catholic Mass was reintroduced, and Holy Communion was now banned by law.	3 The Bishop's Bible, which was in English rather than Latin, was restored, opening it up to a wider readership.
4 The clergy were not allowed to marry. Priests who had married before the new law came into effect were given a choice of two options: Leave their families or lose their job.	4 There was a general removal of 'superstition', such as making the sign of the cross during communion. Simplicity was what the Puritans strived for.

> "THE QUEEN'S REPRISAL WAS BRUTAL AND SWIFT, EXECUTING NOT ONLY THE RINGLEADERS, BUT ALSO JANE GREY"

reported to be pregnant. The young princess denied these rumours, confounding her interrogator. "She hath a very good wit and nothing is gotten of her but by great policy," he wrote. This practice would serve her well once Mary took the throne but not all players were as skilled in the game of thrones; Seymour was executed the following year.

When the staunchly Catholic Mary refused to convert, Edward began proceedings to remove both his sisters from the line to the throne, fixing his hopes on his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, instead. However, the prince was seldom in good health during his short life, so it was no surprise that he died before the contract could be finalised and Mary became the new queen of England. Just as Edward had asked Mary to change her faith, the new queen was determined that her sister should convert. She acquiesced without enthusiasm, but it was clear to both Protestants and Catholics that her true allegiance still lay with her father's Church of England rather than the Pope's Catholic Church. Over the course of Mary's reign, many conspiracy plots were designed to get Elizabeth onto the throne. None of them succeeded, but they did almost manage to get her killed.

In 1554, Thomas Wyatt attempted a rebellion following the announcement that Mary would marry the Spanish king Philip. The queen's reprisal was brutal and swift, executing not only the ringleaders, but Jane Grey as well. Elizabeth claimed ignorance, a trick she managed to successfully repeat a year later after another attempted rebellion in 1555, but her sister's patience was wearing thin and Elizabeth was placed in the Tower of London, with some Catholic supporters clamouring for her execution. Elizabeth's future prospects were looking anything but golden, and the next few months saw her walking a political tightrope. Mary, desperate to provide her husband and her country with a Catholic heir to end the uncertainty surrounding the throne, announced that she was pregnant, but by 1558, it became clear that Mary's condition was not pregnancy, but a devastating illness. Her health broke quickly, and she died on 17 November of that year after begging Elizabeth to keep England Catholic once she took the throne. Her wishes would not be fulfilled.

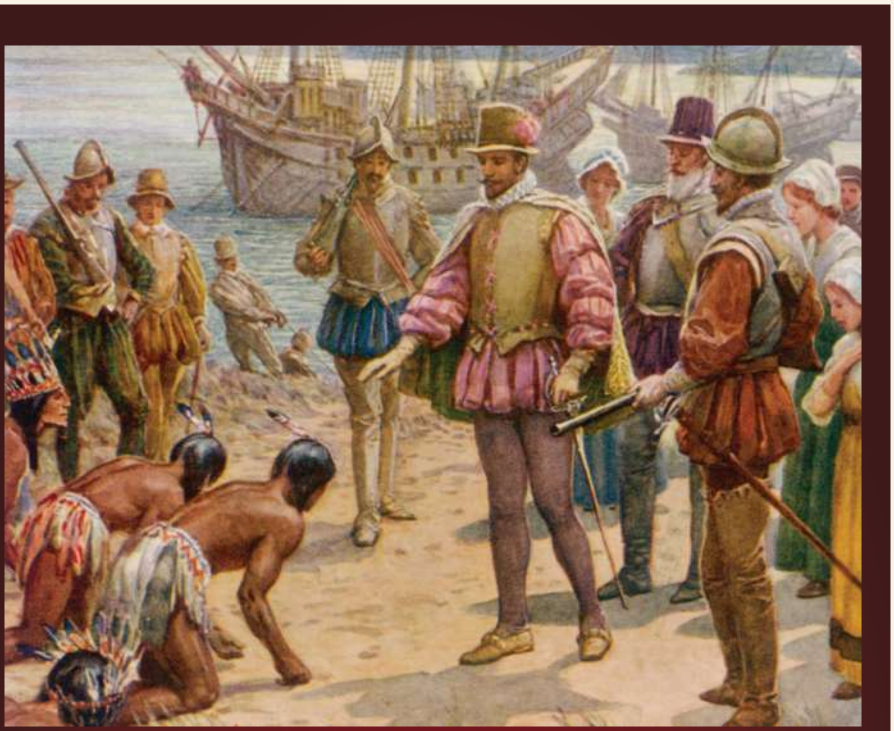
Elizabeth's coronation was a stunning balancing act. With countless eyes waiting for any hint of an overtly Protestant or Catholic gestures, Elizabeth managed to confound them all. Instead, the emphasis was elsewhere: Elizabeth's intention to restore England to a state of prosperity. The new queen knew that if she was to have any chance of surviving her early years she would need trusted and astute advisors, and chose William Cecil and Robert Dudley. Cecil had worked for Edward, survived the reign of Mary and was fiercely loyal to Elizabeth. In contrast, Dudley's appointment and favour with the queen had nothing to do with his abilities as a politician. He had known Elizabeth since childhood and her affection for him had only grown stronger, and rumours abounded that she spent the nights as well as the days with him.

Cecil disapproved of Dudley and agreed with the majority of Parliament that Elizabeth should marry as soon as possible. The eyes of France and

Spain were fixed on England and it made sense for the queen to create a marriage alliance with one of these major powers for her and the country's safety. King Philip made no secret of his desire to marry Elizabeth, but she had no interest in marrying Mary's former husband. Henry of Anjou was suggested as a match, but he was still a child. Elizabeth spoke instead of being married to her nation, but scandal struck when Dudley's wife Amy died suddenly after apparently falling down the stairs in 1560. It was rumoured that Dudley had committed the deed for his queen, and Elizabeth was forced to expel him from her court.

In 1561, Elizabeth's cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, returned to Scotland from France. For many Catholics, Mary was the true successor and she did little to downplay those clamouring for a Catholic monarch. Her arrival was perfectly timed, as Elizabeth was on the verge of death due to smallpox. However, she recovered and, with the scandal over Dudley dissipating, Elizabeth chose him to be Lord Protector, bringing him back into her court, before shocking everyone by suggesting

> "THE QUEEN RALLIED THE ENGLISH TROOPS BY DECLARING THAT SHE WOULD FIGHT BY THEIR SIDE TO REPEL ANYONE WHO DARED TO SET FOOT ON THEIR LAND"



DID ELIZABETH HAVE A GENUINE THIRST FOR NEW WORLDS?

Although the expansion of trade into India occurred during Elizabeth's reign, in terms of exploration she is best remembered for England's attempt to colonise North America. The Spanish and Portuguese had already laid claim to much of South America, establishing lucrative trade routes, but North America was relatively unexplored. Elizabeth was reluctant to fund exploratory voyages for much the same reasons that she was reluctant to fund wars: they were expensive and risky. However, she could be won around with the promise of riches from one of her favourites and, when sailor Davy Ingram returned to England with alluring tales of riches and simple inhabitants, geographer Richard Hakluyt began plotting a serious expedition to be led by Walter Raleigh.

With the promise of fortune and the flattery of Raleigh, she agreed to a trip to form a colony named after her: Virginia. The first party launched, and Raleigh would follow. When the nobleman arrived, he saw the settlement had failed. The English were desperate to leave. Raleigh's second attempt was intended for Chesapeake Bay, but the first group, led by John White, returned to Roanoke. Raleigh arrived with his second group and found no trace of survivors. Elizabeth was disappointed that these costly ventures yielded no results. There was one purpose to these expeditions, as de Lisle explains very simply: "Making money."

VERDICT

The Elizabethan era's reputation for exploration is largely due to the fact that there was money to be made from it. Piratical ventures were profitable; colonisation was not.

1. 1584
Walter Raleigh and Richard Hakluyt convince Elizabeth to fund an expedition to explore the possibility that a colony could be founded on America's east coast.

2. 1585
Following a positive report, Raleigh dispatches colonists to settle at Roanoke in Virginia. By the time he arrives on a later ship, the crops have failed and the English are desperate to leave.

3. 1587
Raleigh tries again to establish a colony at Chesapeake Bay, but instead the settlers travel to Roanoke. When Raleigh arrives, all 150 colonists have disappeared, with only a single skeleton remaining.

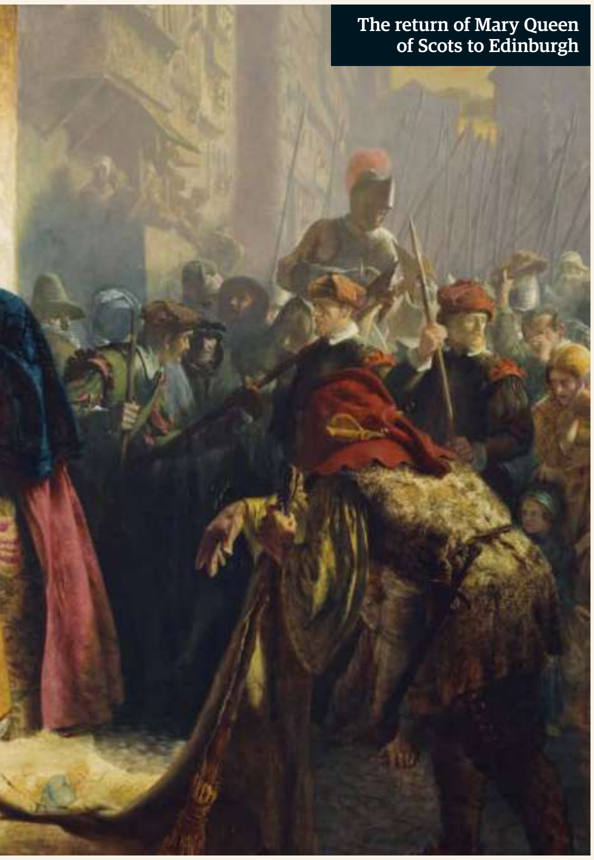
a marriage between him and Mary. This was Elizabeth showing her political astuteness; she knew well that Scotland with a Catholic heir would have too much power, but a heir produced by her favourite and Mary Queen of Scots could potentially unite the two countries. However, Dudley refused and Mary had no interest in marrying her cousin's paramour.

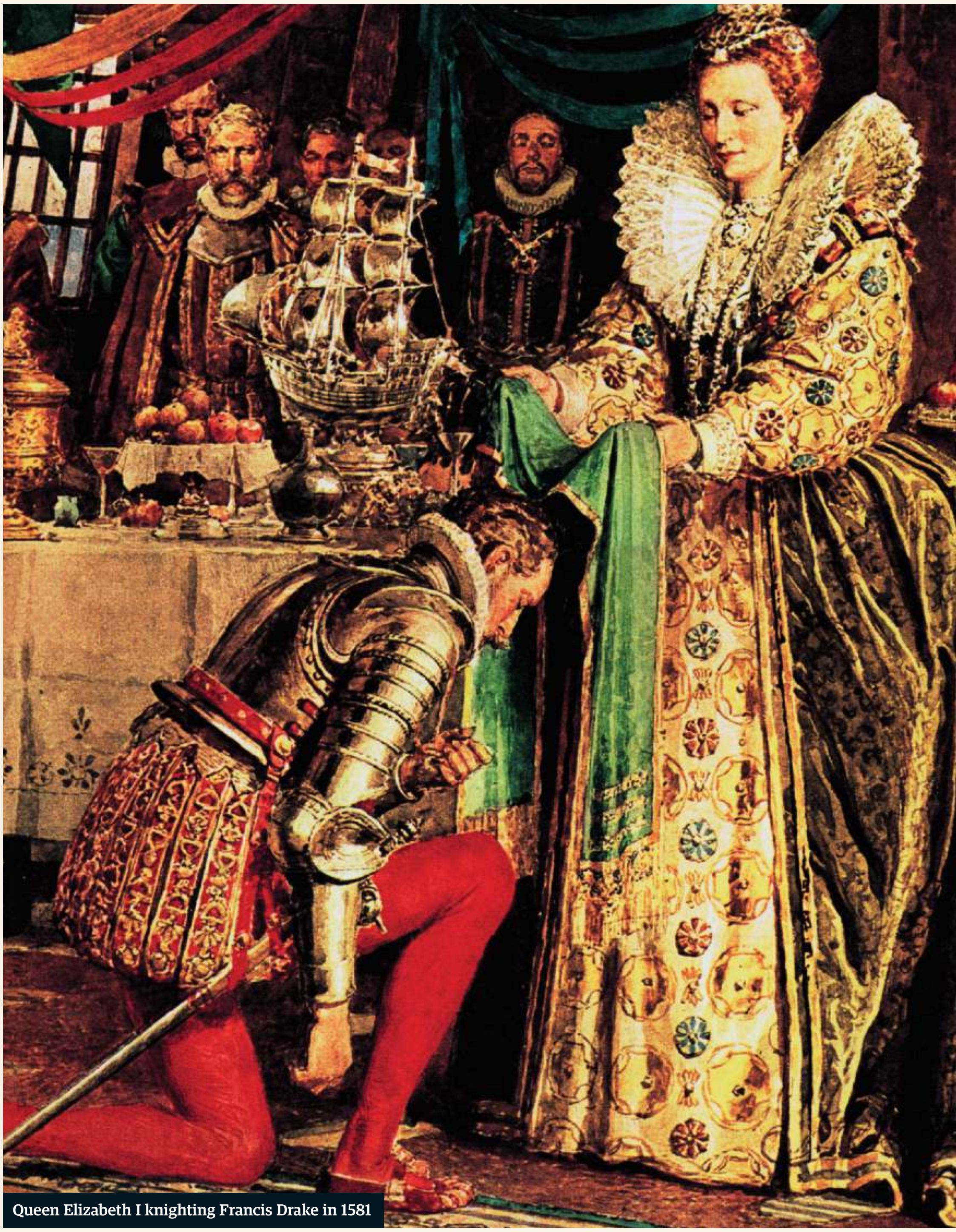
Instead, Mary married for love, choosing Lord Henry Darnley. Seeing this may have prompted Elizabeth to renew her interest in Dudley, which greatly upset the council, in particular the ambitious Lord Norfolk. When the tension between Norfolk and Dudley grew too great, Elizabeth understood that she needed to assert her authority. "I will have here but one mistress and no master," she told Dudley. It was both a political statement and a personal one. The lack of a husband and heir was only made worse in 1566 when Mary gave birth to a son, James, but she was desperately unhappy. Darnley was a violent, drunken husband who many believed brutally murdered her secret lover, David Rizzio. Darnley would meet his own nasty end a year later, when he was found strangled in the garden of a house. Mary quickly married the Earl of Bothwell, the man who had allegedly murdered Darnley, and Scottish forces rose against her. Imprisoned and forced to abdicate, she eventually fled to England. Elizabeth agreed to give Mary shelter, but her arrival in the north had given Catholics a figurehead and rebellion brewed.

The northern Earls suggested that Norfolk should marry Mary: soon, the Northern Rebellion had begun. As the rebel forces marched south, Elizabeth moved Mary to Coventry and mustered troops of her own. The southern Earls rallied to her cause, which stunned the rebel forces, who began to retreat. Elizabeth's victory was quick and decisive, with 700 men being executed in a brutal display of power. Norfolk was placed under arrest, but a lack of concrete evidence postponed his execution, until he was implicated in the Ridolfi plot, which aimed to make Philip II king. Elizabeth ordered and rescinded Norfolk's execution three times - a prime example of how indecisive she could be at times - before finally deciding that he simply had to die.

If Elizabeth's position at home appeared shaky it was positively stable compared to how she was viewed abroad. The Pope decreed that anyone who murdered the heretical English queen would be forgiven, a statement King Philip took to heart. Not wanting to risk open war, Elizabeth found other ways to aggravate her enemies. She quietly patronised the piratical exploits of John Hawkins and later his cousin Francis Drake. In 1577, when he planned to travel to South America to raid Spanish gold, Elizabeth met Drake with Walsingham, one of her French ambassadors.

The cautious Cecil had to be kept in the dark, but she told Drake explicitly that she supported


The return of Mary Queen of Scots to Edinburgh


Queen Elizabeth I knighting Francis Drake in 1581

him: “I would gladly be revenged on the King of Spain for diverse injuries I have received.” Having sailed through the Straits of Magellan and captured a Spanish ship carrying up to £200,000 in gold, Drake decided to sail across the Pacific, in the process becoming the first man to circumnavigate the globe. Elizabeth gloried in his achievement, and when she met the Spanish ambassador in 1581, she pointedly wore a crucifix Drake had given to her from the loot. She dined with Drake on the Golden Hind and knighted him. He had done her proud.

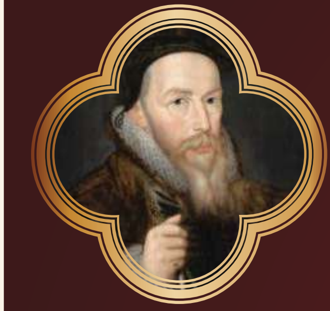
These piratical exploits stood in sharp contrast to the events of 1572. The St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in Paris – the assassination of a number of French Calvinist Protestants – shocked England and the ambassador Sir Francis Walsingham was forced to take refuge. Elizabeth brought him back to London to become her spymaster, where he advised that Mary Queen of Scots was a real danger. The uprising was not only a shocking scene for English Protestants; it was also a sign that the Protestant Netherlands and their booming wool trade would soon be in danger. When William the Silent asked Elizabeth for military assistance, she did not want to be seen to intervene and give Philip of Spain an excuse to attack. Walsingham counselled war, while Cecil continued to preach marriage. So Elizabeth entertained the idea of marrying the Duke of Anjou, roughly ten years after it had first been suggested. Then, he had been an ugly youth and she had been a beautiful queen. Now, she was visibly older and the flattery of the French ambassador and Anjou’s letters began to win her over. When they finally met, it appeared that Elizabeth really was in love, but there were genuine concerns over how the English people would react.

“The anxieties Elizabeth expressed to the emissary of Mary Queen of Scots in 1561, that she too could not marry anyone without triggering unrest in one group or another, only deepened following Mary Queen of Scots’s disastrous marriages to Darnley and then Bothwell – which ended in her overthrow,” explains Leanda de Lisle, author of *Tudor: The Family Story*. “Elizabeth continued to look publicly for a husband to fulfil national expectations that she would provide them with an undisputed heir, and surely she hoped it was not impossible. She was married to her kingdom – a phrase she had learned from Mary Tudor. But while Mary had married, Elizabeth did not because she feared revolt by those who disapproved of her choice.”

Although she clearly wanted to marry the man that she had nicknamed her “frog,” the English people found the idea of their Virgin Queen marrying a French Catholic absolutely repulsive. When a pamphlet appeared that condemned the union, Elizabeth decreed that both the author and his printer should have their right hands cut off. Her Privy Council was split in half, with the jealous Robert Dudley vehemently opposed.

MAIN PLAYERS OF

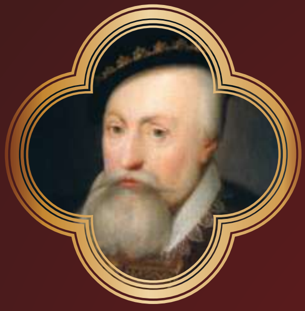
COUNCIL AND GOVERNMENT



WILLIAM CECIL

1520-98

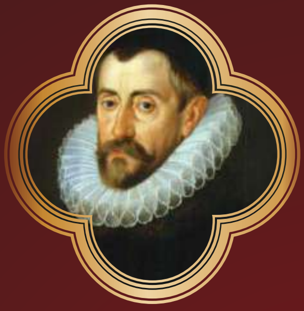
A canny political operator who understood the difficulties that were ahead, Cecil was Elizabeth’s first appointment and was fiercely loyal, dedicating his life to helping her. Although he believed she should marry, Elizabeth knew Cecil was invaluable and pressured him into staying on, even when he was sickly and deaf.



ROBERT DUDLEY

1532-88

Dudley had known Elizabeth since childhood, and was her first love. His appointment to court had more to do with her affection for him than any outstanding abilities as a politician, however, and his presence at court proved to be a continual source of rumour and scandal. Their relationship was rocky and driven by passion.

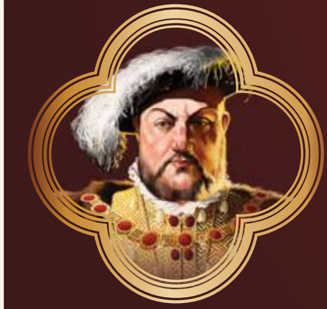


FRANCIS WALSINGHAM

1532-90

The Protestant Walsingham was allowed to return to England after Mary’s death, and quickly became one of Elizabeth’s most invaluable assets. A brilliant spymaster and politician, he understood the threat that Mary Queen of Scots posed, and engineered her downfall. He also supported Drake and Raleigh’s explorations.

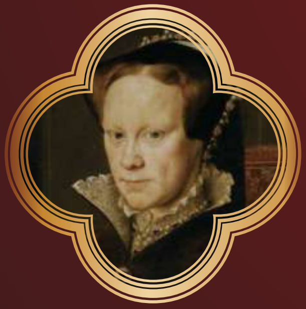
FAMILY



HENRY VIII

1491-1547

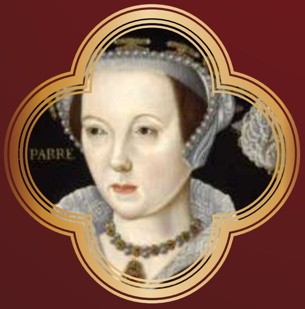
Henry was desperate for a boy to carry on his family name, and was disappointed when Anne Boleyn gave him Elizabeth. He was absent for much of her childhood, but was kept informed of her progress nonetheless. When he finally met his daughter he was very impressed, so much so that he reinstated her and Mary into his legacy.



MARY TUDOR

1516-58

Despite their differences, Mary, Elizabeth and their brother Edward had a relatively close relationship as children. When she became queen, Mary was desperate for Elizabeth to convert and unable to understand why she wouldn’t. She came close to executing her sister, but abstained, finally requesting that she keep England Catholic.



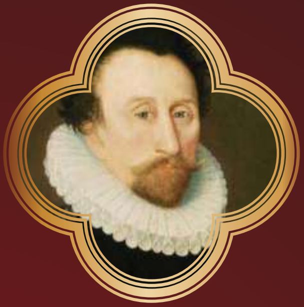
CATHERINE PARR

1512-48

Catherine and Elizabeth became close during her marriage to Henry, and Elizabeth lived with Catherine after his death. However, Catherine’s husband Thomas Seymour was more interested in their young charge than his wife, and she assisted in his attempts at seduction, dying soon after they failed.

THE GOLDEN AGE

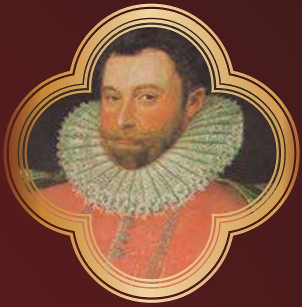
EXPLORERS



JOHN HAWKINS

1532-95

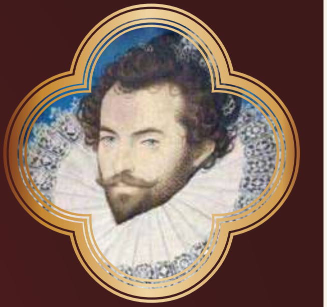
Hawkins may have possessed a coat of arms, but he first managed to find favour with the Queen as a pirate. With Elizabeth's implicit permission, he planned and executed a series of daring raids on Spanish ports in the West Indies, but after a disastrous third voyage he returned to England, where he began working for the Queen in a more direct capacity.



FRANCIS DRAKE

1540-96

Having sailed on his cousin John Hawkins' expeditions, Francis Drake had no love for the Spanish. He was willing to circumnavigate the globe in order to rob them of their riches and deliver them to Elizabeth, who was delighted with his exploits, and continued to commission him to undertake raids on Spanish ports.

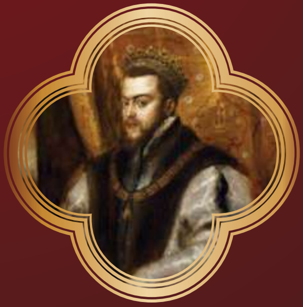


WALTER RALEIGH

1554-1618

Raleigh gained Elizabeth's favour at court and quickly set his sights on expanding her empire. He decided he would establish Britain's first colony in North America, and told the Queen it would be named after her: Virginia. To his great dismay, the colony at Roanoke failed. He is often falsely credited with bringing potatoes and tobacco to England.

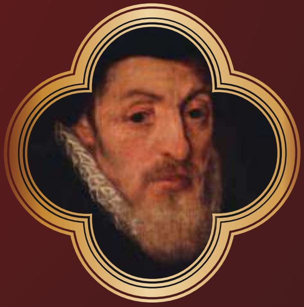
ENEMIES



KING PHILIP II

1527-1598

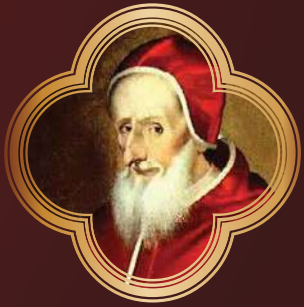
The main religious threat to Elizabeth for the majority of her realm came from the King of Spain. The Pope might have given the bull that deposed Elizabeth but the fiercely Catholic Philip was the man with the army that could enforce it. He had attempted to woo the princess while still married to her sister but, once rebuffed, relentlessly opposed her.



JOHN WHITGIFT

1530-1604

As the issue of religious tolerance became increasingly difficult to manage, Elizabeth hand-picked her old chaplain for the role of Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a stubborn man, as evidenced by his refusal to leave England during Queen Mary's reign. Like Elizabeth, he was a Conformist and ruthlessly punished those who publicly strayed from the 'right' path.



POPE PIUS V

1504-72

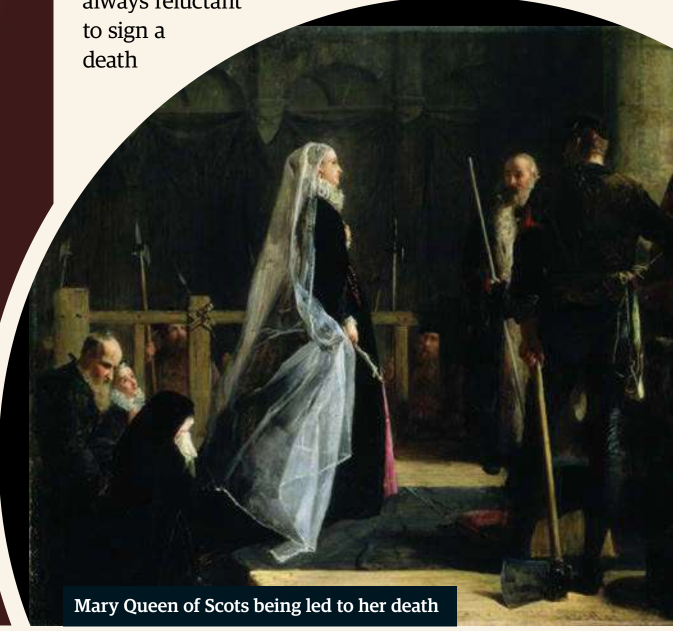
As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Pius V saw Elizabeth's status of Queen of England and head of its church not only as an affront to his religion, but as an act of heresy. He went as far as to issue a Papal Bull on 27 April 1570, which declared that her subjects no longer owed her any kind of allegiance.

> "SHE BITTERLY RESENTED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MARY'S EXECUTION"

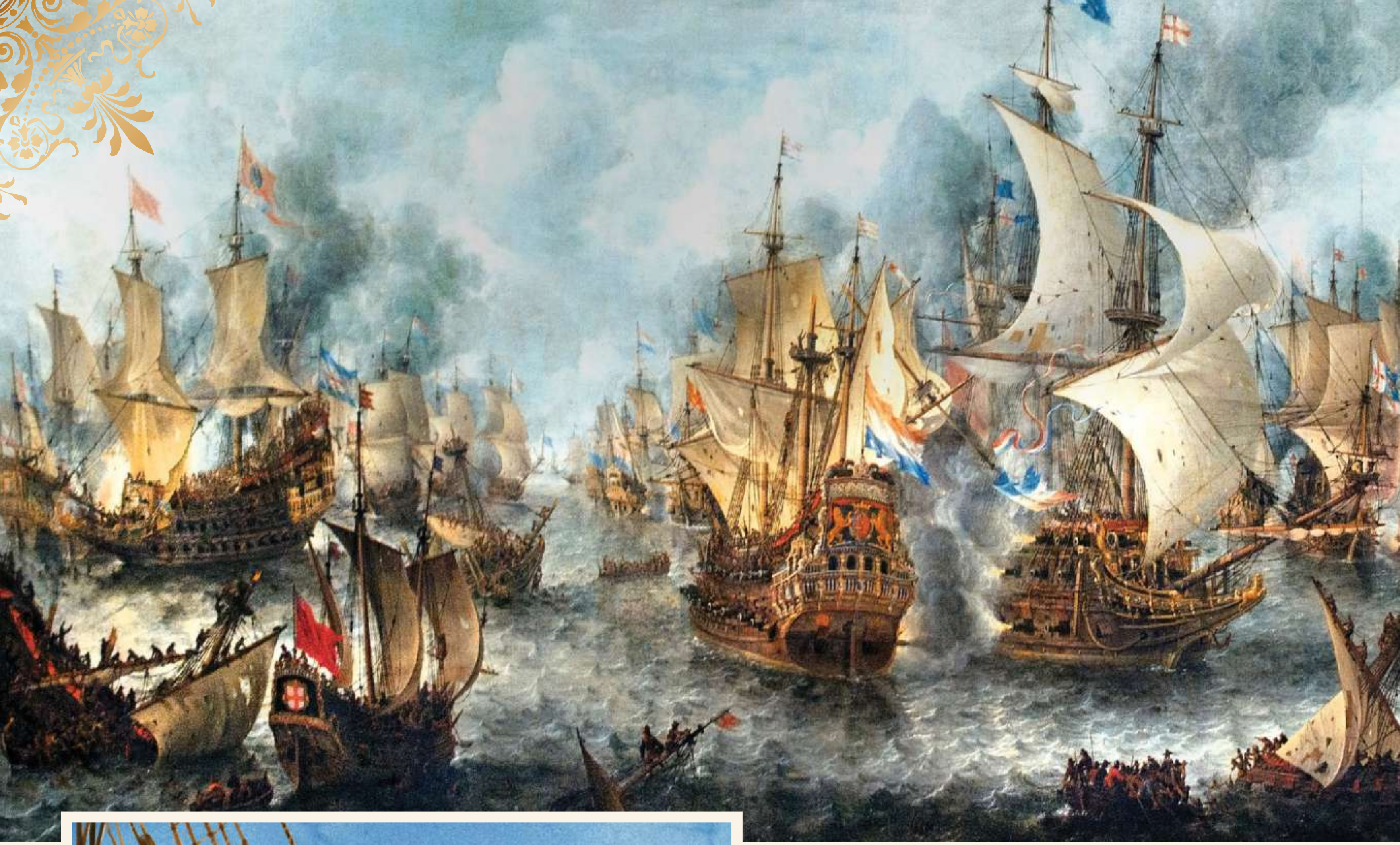
Elizabeth was heartbroken, but she agreed to abstain. She gave Anjou £10,000 to continue his war against Philip in the Netherlands, but did not see him again. He tried to take power for himself but failed and died a year later.

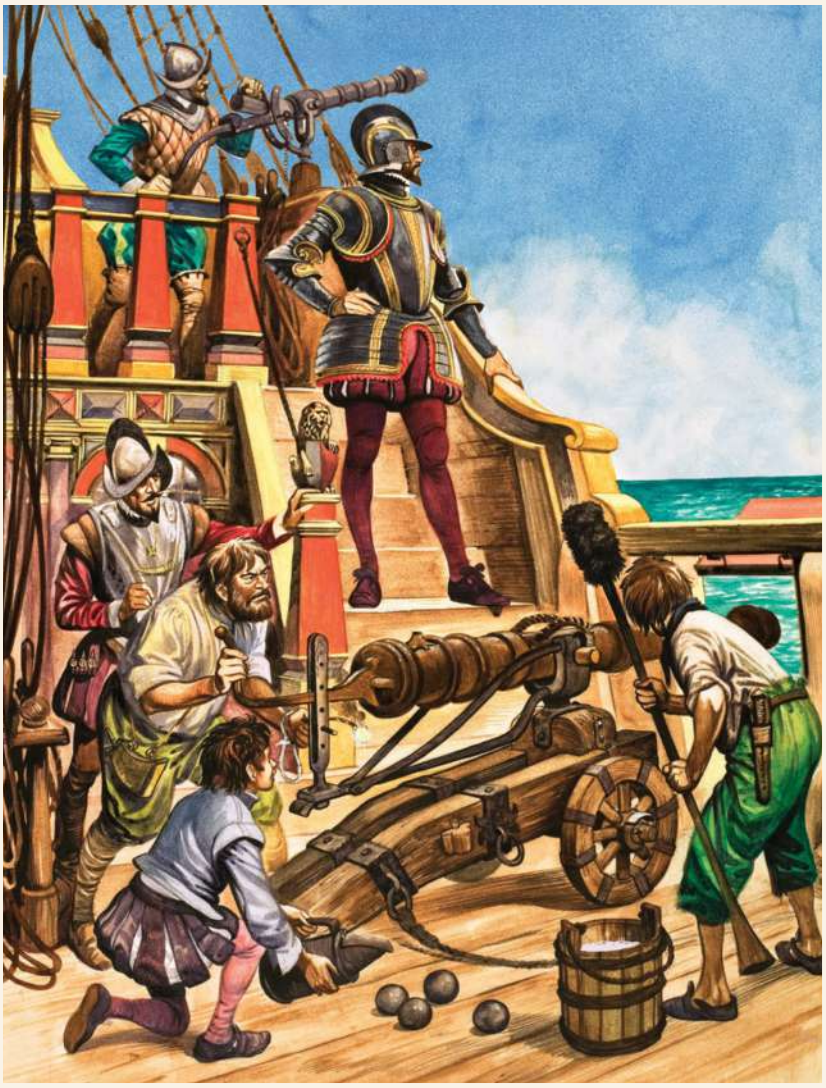
When William the Silent was assassinated in his own house in 1584 by a Catholic fanatic, it was clear that military intervention could not be put off any longer and so in 1585, to the relief of her impatient councillors, she agreed to send a small force of men. Dudley took command in the Netherlands but proved to be incompetent, losing territory to Philip's general, the Duke of Parma. Mary was now more dangerous than ever. Elizabeth ordered her imprisonment at the urging of Francis Walsingham, who had no intention of allowing her to live much longer. He arranged for a servant, one of his own spies, to suggest that Mary smuggle letters in beer barrels, allowing Walsingham to read everything. When Thomas Babingdon wrote to Mary with a plan to assassinate Elizabeth and give her the crown Mary wrote back with her approval; the spymaster's trap had worked perfectly, and he had ensnared his unwitting prey.

Walsingham leapt into action and ordered the conspirators' execution. Elizabeth had always been reluctant to execute her cousin, but she agreed she would have to stand trial. It was no surprise when the court decided that Mary should be put to death. Elizabeth grieved for Mary, or at least lamented her death. The man who had delivered the warrant was imprisoned and stripped of his title. Elizabeth was always reluctant to sign a death



Mary Queen of Scots being led to her death





The Spanish Armada is put into disarray by English fire ships on 8 August 1588

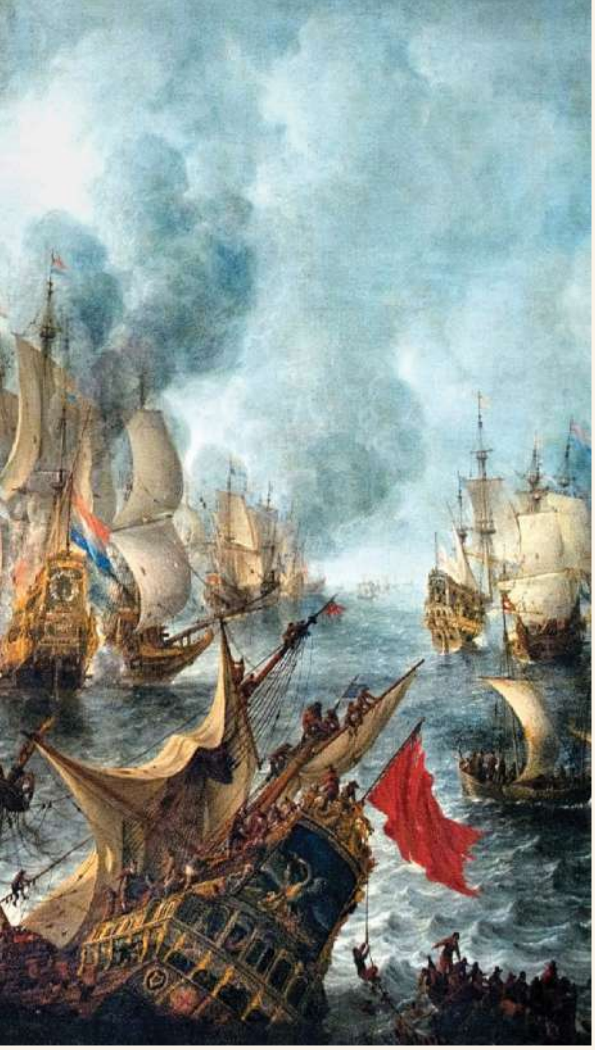
The gun-crew on an Elizabethan ship - she funded the journeys of numerous privateers

warrant - or at least she was reluctant to be seen to sign it. We can't know how much of Elizabeth's grief was genuine, but she bitterly resented the circumstances of Mary's execution.

"Elizabeth was reluctant to be seen to execute first the senior nobleman in England, in Norfolk, and then a fellow queen, in Mary," says de Lisle: "That is not to say she regretted their deaths. She would have preferred to have Mary murdered, for example, as she made very clear. It is also notable that she was quite ruthless in ordering the deaths of traitors of humble birth - the 900 or so executed after the Northern Rebellion testifies to that. This was three times the numbers Henry VIII had executed after the far more serious Pilgrimage of Grace, and ten times the numbers Mary executed after Wyatt's revolt."

Mary's execution provided Philip II with the reason he needed to declare war and his Spanish Armada co-ordinated with the Duke of Parma's forces in the Netherlands, with the two forces meeting before sailing on England. They launched on 12 July 1588, their forces possessing more than twice the number of English ships, but the English ships did have some advantages; they were smaller, faster, and designed to carry guns rather than men. The English ships could outmanoeuvre the

"WITH THE THREAT OF A CATHOLIC FORCE AT THEIR DOOR, THE QUEEN RALLIED THE SPIRITS OF THE ENGLISH TROOPS"



Spanish fleet in open water and began to engage them in small skirmishes. It was at this point that Elizabeth rode out to meet her troops. With the threat of a Catholic force at their door, the Queen rallied the spirit of the English troops by declaring that she would fight by their side to repel anyone who dared to set foot on their land.

This grandstanding was impressive and may have gone down in history's annals but was ultimately unnecessary. The Spanish Armada failed and Elizabeth's victory was the seal on her status. 'The Golden Age' had begun, where art and literature flowered. With England a visibly powerful state, the aristocracy began to patronise the arts with great abandon. The famous playwrights of the age enjoyed patronage, albeit with some caveats. When Shakespeare wrote *Richard II* he was encouraged to remove a scene suggesting the ageing monarch should step aside. "Elizabeth did not care for plays," confirms de Lisle: "All too often they were used to lecture her on this or that."

Her crown may have been safe for now, but she received devastating blows with the deaths of two of her most trusted advisors, Dudley and Walsingham. Dudley was replaced at court by his handsome stepson, the Earl of Essex, and the young flatterer quickly became her favourite. "Robert Dudley's death in 1588 signalled the passing of the old order, but Elizabeth still hoped she could continue ruling according to her motto, 'Semper Eadem' ('Always the same')" explains de Lisle. "As the years began to pass and her servants died she either did not replace them or find a near-equivalent to the servant she had lost." It's

DID ENGLAND BECOME A NATION TO BE FEARED?

Elizabeth's foreign policy was decidedly more cautious than expansive. She was desperate to avoid conflict because it was expensive and the outcome always uncertain. However, she had a spirit that could easily be won over by the idea of adventure. She delighted in the expeditions of John Hawkins and Francis Drake, which could be seen to be aggravating the King of Spain without actually declaring open conflict. In 1562, she agreed to a military expedition in Calais, which was crushed by Catherine de' Medici's forces, and this failure would influence her military decisions for the rest of her reign.

"There was no glory in it for Elizabeth as there was for a male monarch," Leanda de Lisle reveals: "She understood the truth of the adage of Mary of Hungary: that war made it impossible for a woman to rule effectively, 'all she can do is shoulder responsibility for mistakes committed by others.'"

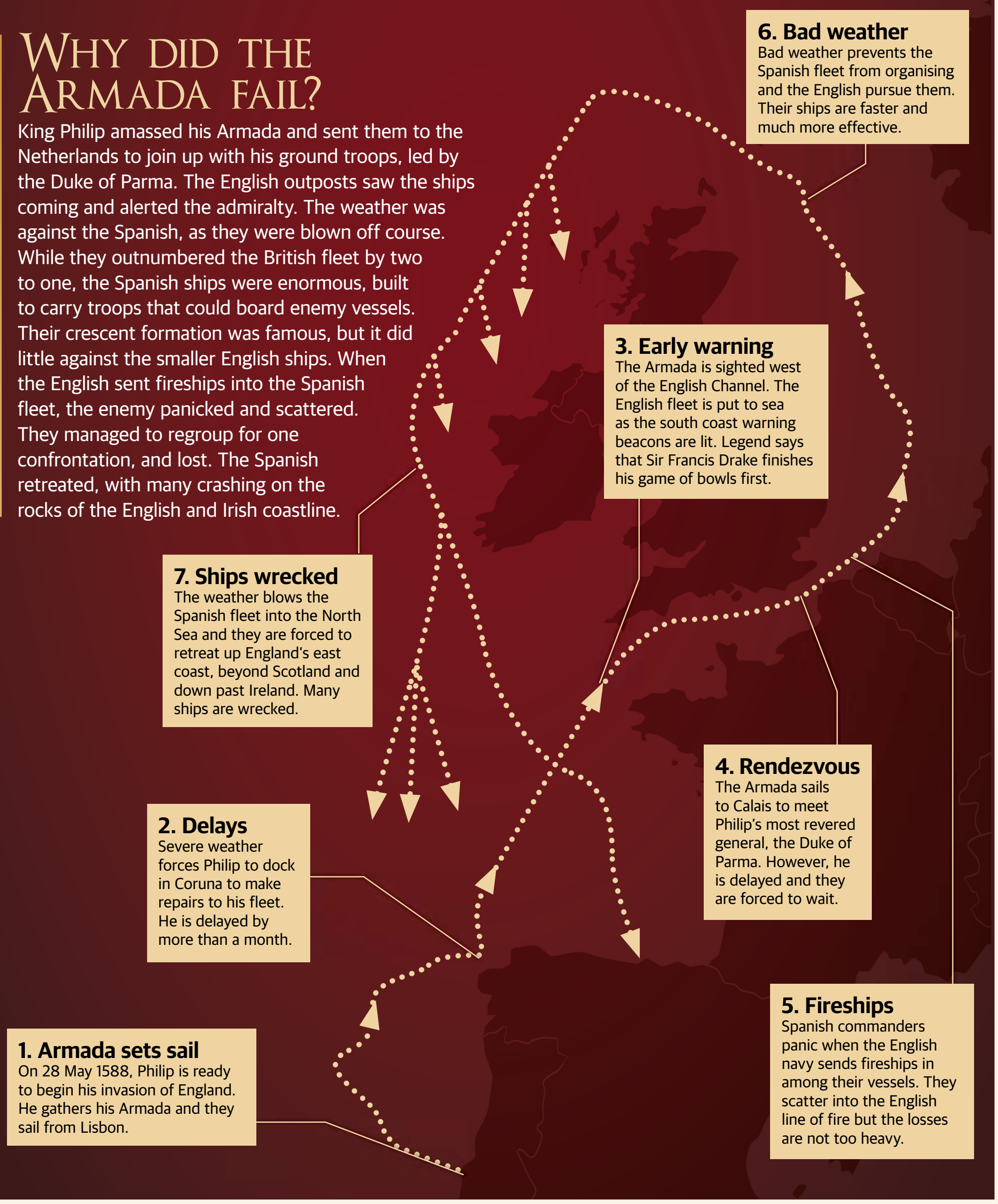
Her ally and enemy lines were drawn by religion. France and Spain were clearly opposed to England on these grounds, which is why her courtiers were so anxious that Elizabeth marry an eligible man from either country. Even after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, Elizabeth was reluctant to be drawn into open war. The piecemeal way in which she gave the Dutch her assistance shows her reluctance to engage in open conflict of any kind, first offering financial support to the Dutch troops, then the Duke of Anjou, before finally agreeing to send an English force when there was no other option. Her cautious attitude towards foreign policy doubtless saved the kingdom a lot of money. However, it was taken out of her hands when the Spanish Armada sailed on England."

VERDICT

The victory against the Armada was a shining moment but for the most part Elizabeth kept out of foreign conflict. When she didn't, she regularly suffered defeats.

WHY DID THE ARMADA FAIL?

King Philip amassed his Armada and sent them to the Netherlands to join up with his ground troops, led by the Duke of Parma. The English outposts saw the ships coming and alerted the admiralty. The weather was against the Spanish, as they were blown off course. While they outnumbered the British fleet by two to one, the Spanish ships were enormous, built to carry troops that could board enemy vessels. Their crescent formation was famous, but it did little against the smaller English ships. When the English sent fireships into the Spanish fleet, the enemy panicked and scattered. They managed to regroup for one confrontation, and lost. The Spanish retreated, with many crashing on the rocks of the English and Irish coastline.



1. Armada sets sail
On 28 May 1588, Philip is ready to begin his invasion of England. He gathers his Armada and they sail from Lisbon.

2. Delays
Severe weather forces Philip to dock in Coruna to make repairs to his fleet. He is delayed by more than a month.

3. Early warning
The Armada is sighted west of the English Channel. The English fleet is put to sea as the south coast warning beacons are lit. Legend says that Sir Francis Drake finishes his game of bowls first.

4. Rendezvous
The Armada sails to Calais to meet Philip's most revered general, the Duke of Parma. However, he is delayed and they are forced to wait.

5. Fireships
Spanish commanders panic when the English navy sends fireships in among their vessels. They scatter into the English line of fire but the losses are not too heavy.

6. Bad weather
Bad weather prevents the Spanish fleet from organising and the English pursue them. Their ships are faster and much more effective.

7. Ships wrecked
The weather blows the Spanish fleet into the North Sea and they are forced to retreat up England's east coast, beyond Scotland and down past Ireland. Many ships are wrecked.

a sign of how much she leaned on her old guard that she continued to place her trust in William Cecil, even though he was almost entirely deaf and increasingly ill. It was only when he died in 1598 that Elizabeth finally agreed to appoint Robert Cecil to his father's old post. When it became known that the Spanish were attempting to rebuild their fleet, Essex led a fleet on Cadiz and decimated their forces in port. The success gave Essex fame, something Elizabeth was taken aback by. She tried to curb him, aware that her standing among the people was her greatest asset, but Essex continued to promote his own celebrity. She became more and more frustrated with his outrageous behaviour at court, which came to a dramatic head when he half-drew his sword on her in a fit of pique.

The arts and literature may have been flourishing, but those who subscribe to this being a golden age in England's history often forget that even after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, other uprisings, such as the 1598 Irish rebellion, occurred. The country had long been a problem for Tudor England, which had attempted to impose English values and had seen the Irish as tenants on English territory. Now, with a Spanish-backed uprising, Elizabeth needed to take decisive action. She sent her army at the start of 1599, led by Essex, who was looking to prove himself once more. He was a disaster. Rather than confronting Tyrone on the battlefield, he met him in secret and returned to England having made a treaty without the queen's authority.

When Essex thought Cecil was plotting against him, he rushed to plead his case. Assuming he was still the queen's favourite, he burst into her bedchamber while she was preparing for the day. He had seen Elizabeth without her make-up and regal dressing; not as a queen but as an old woman. She could not afford to be seen like this. The queen dismissed him before summoning him later to confront him with his failures and strip him of power. Rather than accepting his fate, Essex attempted rebellion. He assumed Londoners would back the popular war hero, but Elizabeth proclaimed him a traitor and sent her troops to meet him. The rebellion was a failure and Essex was executed as a traitor.

Although the later years of Elizabeth's reign were far from golden, she could still rally her people when needed. The war in Ireland was expensive and unsuccessful, while overcrowding and failed harvests caused agitation. When Parliament publicly condemned her for granting monopolies to her favourite courtiers, which had led to price-fixing, Elizabeth was forced to address them in 1601. She agreed to put a stop to the monopolies and she reaffirmed her love for England. She won over Parliament, there was a good harvest, and a truce was reached in Ireland and Spain. "Elizabeth, old and ill, did lose some of her former grip, but never entirely," states de Lisle. "She had followed Mary I's example in wooing the common people from the beginning of her reign, and they continued to support her."

Having seen off another uprising, the 50-year-old monarch's health was failing and after an all-too-rare period of good health, Elizabeth grew sickly. She was desperately frustrated by Cecil's growing

DID PEACE REIGN IN ENGLAND?

The early years of Elizabeth's reign were extremely unstable. The Catholics regarded her as a heretical bastard without a just claim to the throne, and she had to prove to her people that she was capable of ruling alone. Conspiracies at home and abroad plotted to remove her from the throne, and when Mary, Queen of Scots took refuge in England, her Catholic enemies finally had someone to rally around. 1569 saw her face the first real uprising with the Northern Rebellion. The Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland rallied the rebel aristocracy around them, but they were not prepared for the force of her reprisal.

In her later years she saw rebellion rear its head again as Essex overstepped his bounds. With famine and overcrowded of cities, Elizabeth's position became unstable once again. "Imagine if Elizabeth had died in October 1562 when she had smallpox," asks de Lisle: "Elizabeth had been on the throne almost four years: only a year short of her sister's reign. If she died, as many feared she would, how would her reign have been remembered? Elizabeth's religious settlement was not viewed as settled by anyone save the Queen. One of her own bishops called it 'a leaden mediocrity'. In military matters, while Mary I's loss of Calais is still remembered, Elizabeth's failed efforts to recover Calais by taking Le Havre and using it as a bargaining tool are completely forgotten. The campaign had ended that August 1562, with the huge loss of 2,000 men."

VERDICT

Elizabeth's reign featured numerous rebellions and uprisings, but this was not unusual for a Tudor monarch, and given the religious uncertainty in the country at the time, she handled the uprisings quickly and decisively.

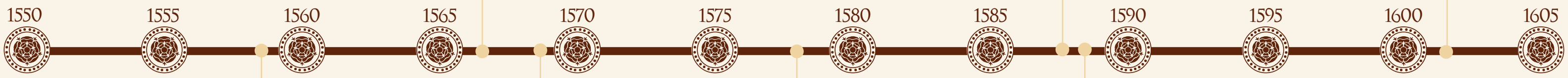
REBELLIONS AGAINST ELIZABETH

When Elizabeth ascended to the throne she immediately faced the threat of rebellion from the Catholic nobility, who resented the fact that she was turning away from the changes made by her sister Mary. The first great uprising came in 1569, when the northern noblemen took advantage of the return of Mary, Queen of Scots to England, and attempted to overthrow her. The Duke of Norfolk, unhappy with being sidelined by the Earl of Dudley, entertained a marriage plot with Mary, while the northern Earls mounted rebellion. It was summarily crushed and hundreds were executed.

The Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's great favourite, attempted a rebellion in 1601 after he was stripped of his powers in an attempt to gain power. In line with his apparently oversized ego, he overestimated his personal popularity, the people's dissatisfaction with their monarch and his Queen's capacity for forgiveness for one of her former favourites. When Elizabeth was confronted with open defiance she rarely hesitated to crush it. She understood when to be brutal and when to charm. With the rebellions against her she was unforgiving and generally unsparing.

> "SHE WOOED HER PEOPLE WITH SMILES, WORDS OF LOVE AND GREAT SHOWMANSHIP, AND SO WON THEIR HEARTS"

ELIZABETH'S GOLDEN MOMENTS



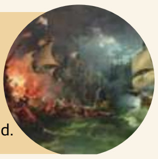
1. 1559
Elizabeth is crowned Queen of England. Everyone watches to see if she displays a Protestant leaning but the ceremony is ambiguous.

2. 1566
Elizabeth announces to a Parliament desperate to see her choose a husband that she is married to England.

3. 1569
The Northern Rebellion is crushed. Elizabeth brutally punishes those responsible and sends a shocking reminder to anyone who would challenge her.

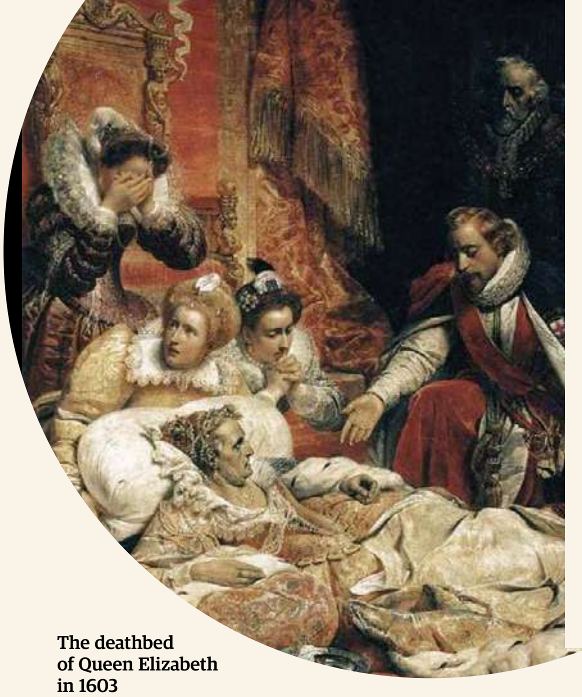
4. 1577
Francis Drake circumnavigates the globe and returns with boats filled with riches stolen from the King of Spain.

5. 1587
Elizabeth is forced to execute Mary Queen of Scots, which is the final straw for Catholic Spain.



6. 1588
The Spanish Armada sails for England, but is decisively defeated. Elizabeth delivers her famous Tilbury speech from horseback, which becomes legend.

7. 1601
Following famine and controversy over her granting monopolies to her favourites, Elizabeth gives her 'Golden Speech' to a furious Parliament and wins them over.



The deathbed of Queen Elizabeth in 1603

power over her and refused to go to bed as she realised that the end was coming soon. Elizabeth finally died on 23 March 1603.

Although she had struggled to change with the times in the face of younger advisors, she had been a formidable political operator. She had still shown the cunning and cleverness to understand her situation, and had never lost the image of a queen loved by her people.

"That image was not created for her," explains de Lisle. "Elizabeth never forgot the events of 1553 when the ordinary people had backed the Tudor sisters, while the political elite had supported Jane Grey. Nor did she forget how in 1554, Mary had made a speech at the Guildhall that roused London in her defence against the Wyatt rebellion. Mary had spoken of her marriage to her kingdom, describing her coronation ring as a wedding band, and her love of her subjects as that of a mother for her children. These were the phrases and motifs Elizabeth would use repeatedly and would become absolutely central to her reign. In addition, Elizabeth also had an instinct for the crowd's demands. Even her enemies would admit she had 'the power of enchantment'. She wooed her people with smiles, words of love and great showmanship, and so won their hearts. Elizabeth's people would never forget her. When she died and James I become king, people hugely missed the Tudor theatre of reciprocal love, of which Elizabeth had been the last and brightest star."

Elizabeth's reign was not the golden age that legend so often depicts; she faced serious uprisings, both internal and external, during her reign. She was capable of heartlessness and ruthlessness, and could be indecisive and impetuous. During the course of her rule, England saw famine, rebellion and war. However, there's no mistaking her dedication to her country and her determination to listen to what the people wanted from her – and then give it to them. She walked a political tightrope for most of her life, and the fact that she died peacefully in her bed as queen was a major triumph in itself. The English people loved her, and she, in turn, loved them. In the hearts and minds of many of her subjects, she was – and will always be – Britain's golden monarch.

“The risks were high, but the profits, if successful, were even greater”

HOW ELIZABETH'S PIRATES STOLE THE TUDOR EMPIRE

In the age of exploration, the fate of nations and the fortunes of men were created, sunk and stolen on the open seas

Written by **Frances White**

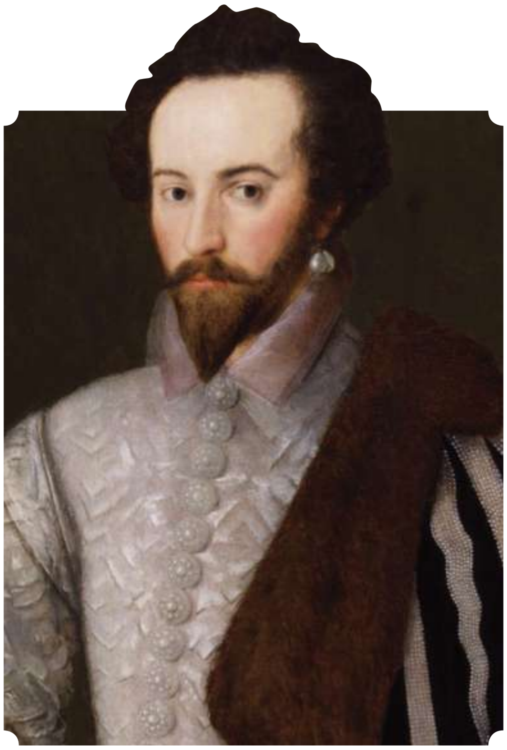
In the years before Elizabeth ascended the throne, England was plagued by internal conflicts. Her father Henry VIII's split from the church had caused England to fall out of favour with Rome, and then the early death of his heir Edward VI prompted a succession crisis. The country had switched from Protestant to Catholic with the rise of Mary I, and those who dared to challenge her were burned in the streets without mercy. While other countries were prospering, England was struggling to maintain order within its own borders. What the country needed was a stable, temperate ruler, one whose reign would allow the nation to flourish; that is what it found in Elizabeth.

A Protestant, but without the extreme beliefs of her father, Elizabeth was tolerant, moderate and wise enough to listen to her counsellors. Finally, with the country somewhat stable, its population was able to look outwards. They discovered that the world had very much moved on without them. Spanish, Italian and Portuguese explorers ruled the waves. Using their sophisticated navigation tools, they had set up powerful and profitable trading roots, and if it didn't act soon, England would find itself isolated and vulnerable.

Armed with new navigation tools, English sailors were finally bold enough to sail beyond the sight of land and into the open sea. The spirit of exploration gripped the nation, which was eager to best the competition, spread Christianity and, most importantly, claim riches. Figures such as Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake, a virtual unknown, became household names after completing valiant voyages for the English crown. As riches began to pour in, more and more ambitious seamen took to the waves eager for a taste of glory, wealth and adventure. The risks were high, but the profits, if successful, were even greater.

It became obvious that true wealth lay in trade and an abundance of chartered companies began to pop up around the country. Making perilous journeys to plant their flags in far-off exotic lands, traders brought a stream of valuable eastern spices, pepper, nutmeg, wine, precious stones, dyes and even slaves pouring into England.

It was an era of exploration, an era of change; a time when a lowly sailor with an adventurous spirit could make his fortune if he was daring enough to take it. There was a new world to explore, and it seemed like the entire world order could change as quickly as the wind.



The pirate knight

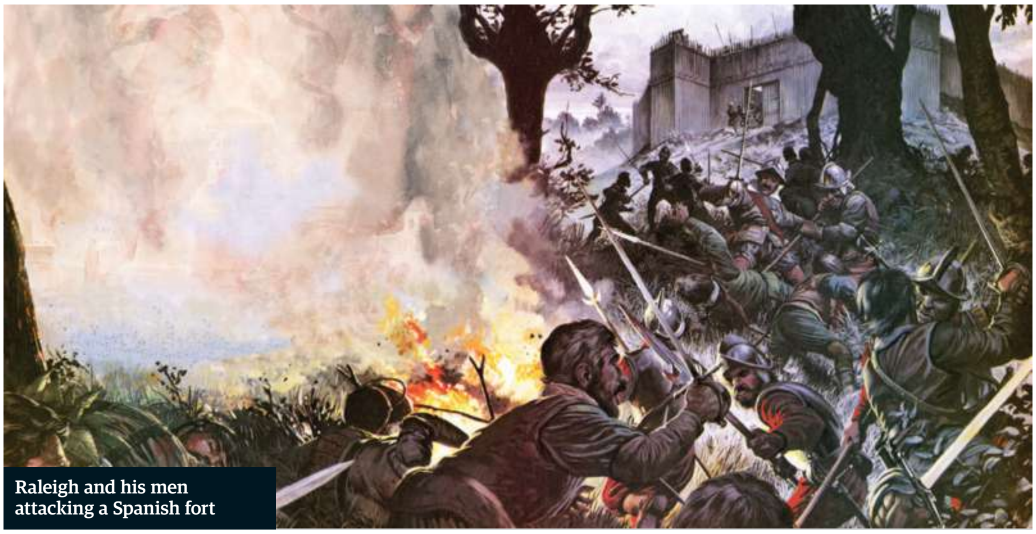
Writer, courtier, spy, Walter Raleigh used his favour with the queen to wipe out his Spanish rivals

The life story of Sir Walter Raleigh is one of glittering highs and devastating lows. It perfectly encapsulates how, in the age of exploration, one's fate could be changed, for better or worse, in an instant.

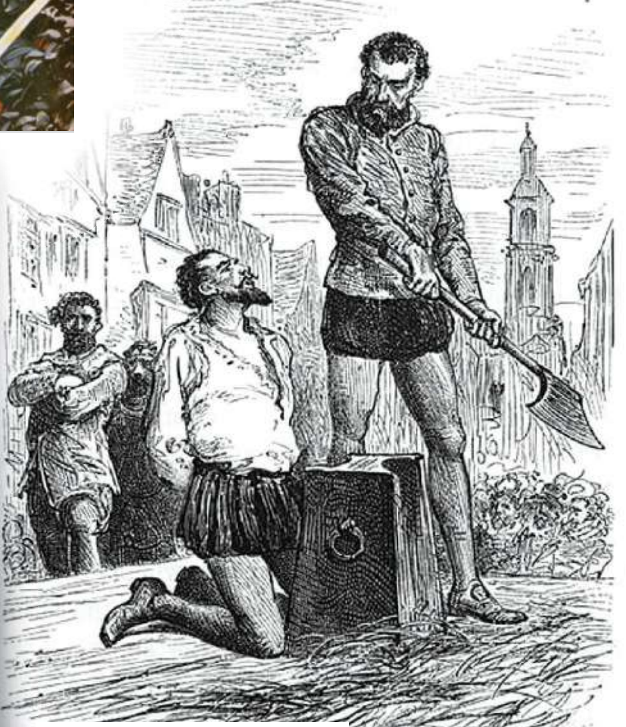
Born into moderate influence, Raleigh was the youngest son of a highly Protestant family. Educated at Oxford University, it seemed he was set for an academic life, but when the French religious civil wars broke out, he left the country to serve with the Huguenots against King Charles IX of France. However, it was his participation in the Desmond Rebellions in Ireland that would forever alter his life.

When uprisings broke out in Munster, Raleigh fought in the queen's army to suppress the rebels. His ruthlessness in punishing the rebels at the Siege of Smerwick in 1580 and his subsequent seizure of lands saw him become a powerful landowner and, most importantly, it caught the attention of the queen. Oozing natural charm and wit, Raleigh became a frequent visitor to the Royal Court and he soon became a firm favourite of Elizabeth. She bestowed her beloved courtier with large estates and even a knighthood. Her deep trust in Raleigh was demonstrated in 1587, when she made him Captain of the Queen's Guard.

It is no surprise then that when Raleigh suggested colonising America, it was supported whole heartedly by the queen, who granted him trade privileges to do just that. From 1584 to 1589, Raleigh led several voyages to the New World; he explored from North Carolina to Florida and bestowed it with the name 'Virginia' in honour of the virgin queen. His attempts to establish



Raleigh and his men attacking a Spanish fort



It is said that after his death, Raleigh's wife kept his embalmed head with her in a velvet bag

Ship's Log

Tudor ships explored the world for riches, but the journey was anything but luxurious

7 February 1595

Rats have infested the ship, making the deck even more uncomfortable and cramped to sleep on. After the vicious winds last night, the sails have been repaired and the water pumped out of the ship. Luckily my backgammon set was not harmed.

15 March 1595

Supplies running low. Hardtack biscuits are completely riddled with maggots and worms but, with nothing else, there is no choice but to eat them. Water no longer suitable to drink, so must survive on beer alone.

18 April 1595

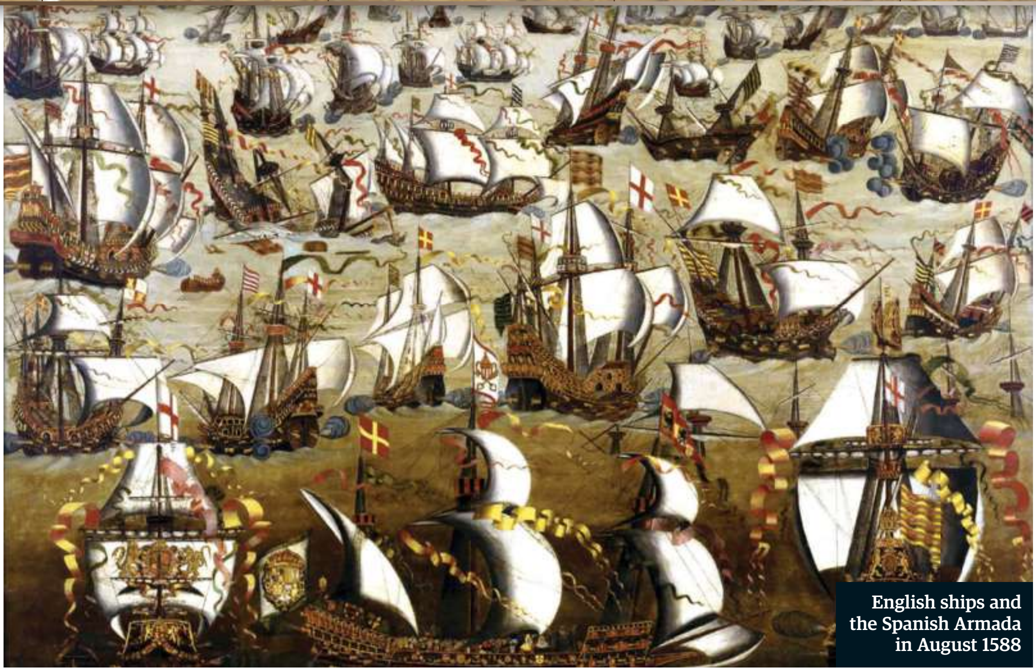
Many of the men have fallen victim to scurvy. The doctor is unable to do much to ease their symptoms. Their teeth are falling out and sores have broken out all over their bodies. Some cases became so severe that several men have died. We threw the corpses overboard.

2 June 1595

The men are getting restless and rebellious. One had to be flogged after speaking back to an officer. Another was keelhauled – tied to a line looped around the ship, thrown overboard and dragged under the vessel. The barnacles cut him up so terribly that he lost an arm.

29 June 1595

Saw some driftwood today, and another officer informed me he saw a seabird. We may be close to land. This completely contradicts the map we were given (again), so new instructions will need to be drawn up if land is spotted.



English ships and the Spanish Armada in August 1588

colonies, however, ended in failure. His settlement at Roanoke Island especially was a disaster, as the entire colony mysteriously disappeared, their fate unknown to this day.

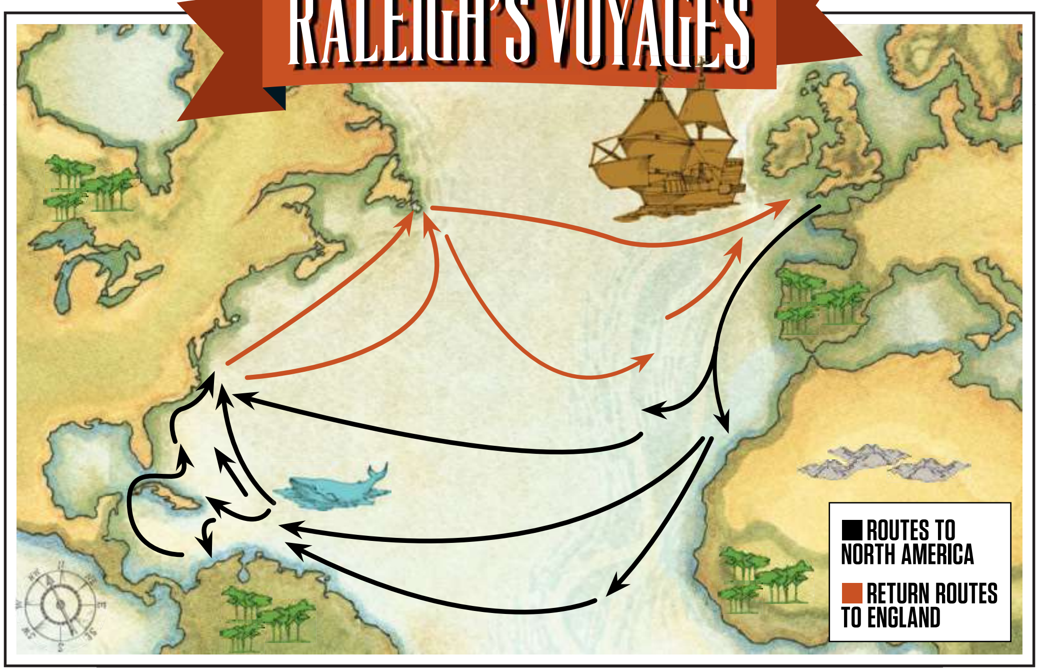
The Roanoke colony was not the only one to experience a disastrous end - Raleigh's relationship with the queen was destroyed when she discovered his secret marriage to one of her own ladies in waiting. Not only was she 11 years younger than him, but she was also pregnant. Furious that he had failed to obtain her permission, and likely a little jealous, Elizabeth had Raleigh imprisoned and his wife cast out of court.

Upon his release, Raleigh was eager to reclaim favour with the monarch so led a mission to search for the legendary city of gold - El Dorado. Although his accounts would claim otherwise, he did not find the city of legend, but instead explored modern-day Guyana and Venezuela. His attack on the powerful Spanish Port of Cadiz and attempts to destroy the newly formed Spanish Armada helped to gradually win back favour with Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth died and James I came to the throne in 1603, Raleigh must have realised his time was up. His ruthless spirit and charm had won him a soft spot in the English queen's heart, but the Scottish king took an immediate dislike to him. Raleigh was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London less than a year after James's ascension. He was found guilty of treason, but was spared from his death sentence and committed to life imprisonment. In 1616 he was released by the money-hungry king to, yet again, search for the fabled city of gold, which his own accounts had helped make into a legend.

During the expedition, he disobeyed James's orders and attacked a Spanish outpost. Spain was furious, and in order to appease them, James had no choice but to punish the rebellious adventurer. Raleigh was re-arrested and his sentence was finally carried out. Bold and cunning to the end, Raleigh reportedly said to his executioner: "This is sharp medicine, but it is a cure for all diseases. What dost thou fear? Strike, man, strike."

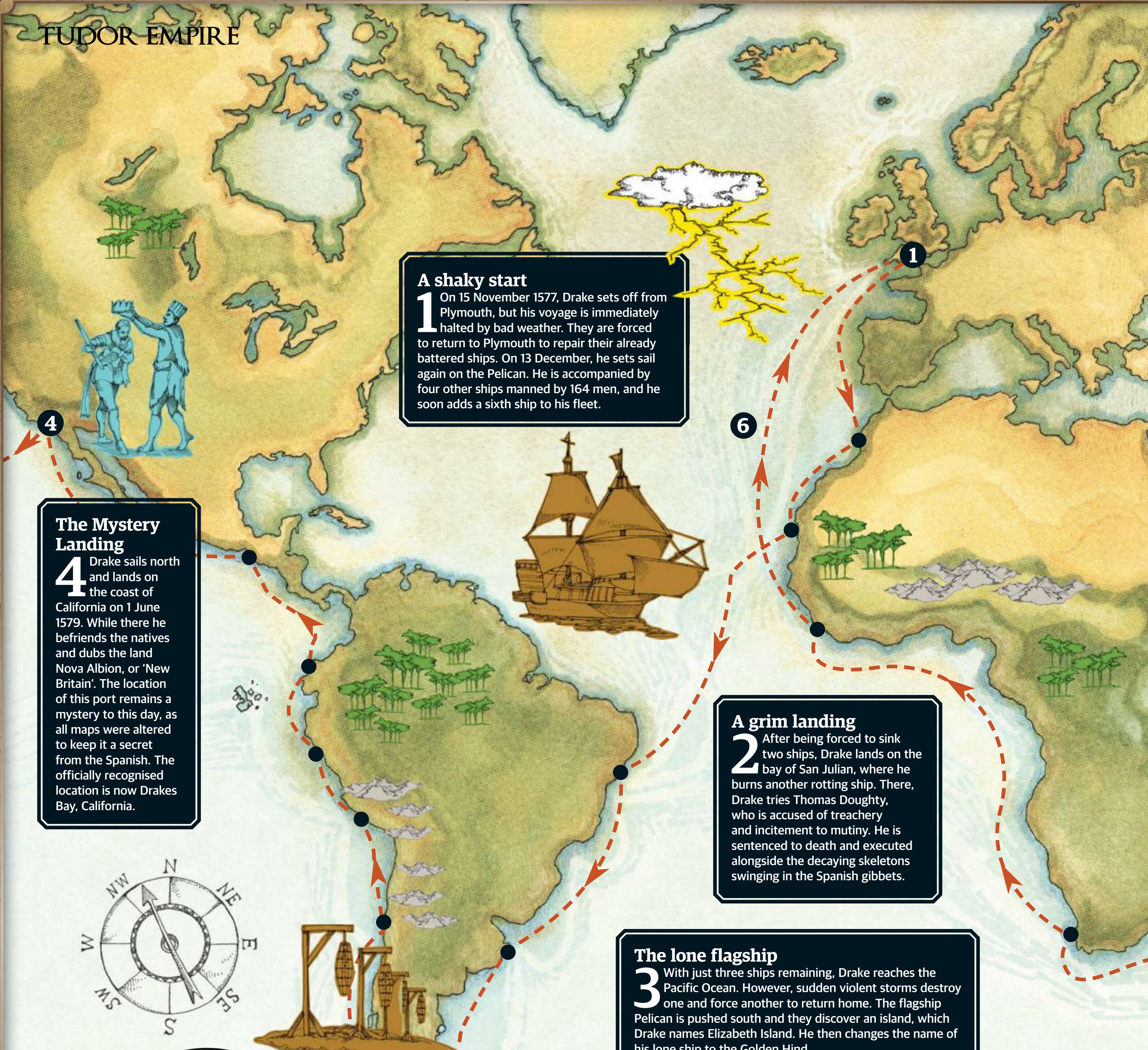
RALEIGH'S VOYAGES



What Was On Board?

A ship of 200 men setting sail for a week would be loaded with...

- 635kg hardtack biscuits
- 1 cat (black or white)
- 68kg fish
- 726kg salted beef or pork
- 1 set of clothes per man
- 200 rats
- 54kg cheese
- 34kg butter
- 20 animals (including goats, chickens, pigs and lambs)
- 1,400 gallons of beer



A shaky start

1 On 15 November 1577, Drake sets off from Plymouth, but his voyage is immediately halted by bad weather. They are forced to return to Plymouth to repair their already battered ships. On 13 December, he sets sail again on the Pelican. He is accompanied by four other ships manned by 164 men, and he soon adds a sixth ship to his fleet.

A grim landing

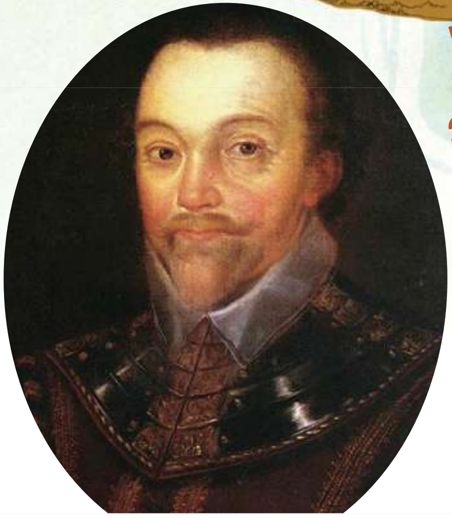
2 After being forced to sink two ships, Drake lands on the bay of San Julian, where he burns another rotting ship. There, Drake tries Thomas Doughty, who is accused of treachery and incitement to mutiny. He is sentenced to death and executed alongside the decaying skeletons swinging in the Spanish gibbets.

The lone flagship

3 With just three ships remaining, Drake reaches the Pacific Ocean. However, sudden violent storms destroy one and force another to return home. The flagship Pelican is pushed south and they discover an island, which Drake names Elizabeth Island. He then changes the name of his lone ship to the Golden Hind.

The Mystery Landing

4 Drake sails north and lands on the coast of California on 1 June 1579. While there he befriends the natives and dubs the land Nova Albion, or 'New Britain'. The location of this port remains a mystery to this day, as all maps were altered to keep it a secret from the Spanish. The officially recognised location is now Drakes Bay, California.



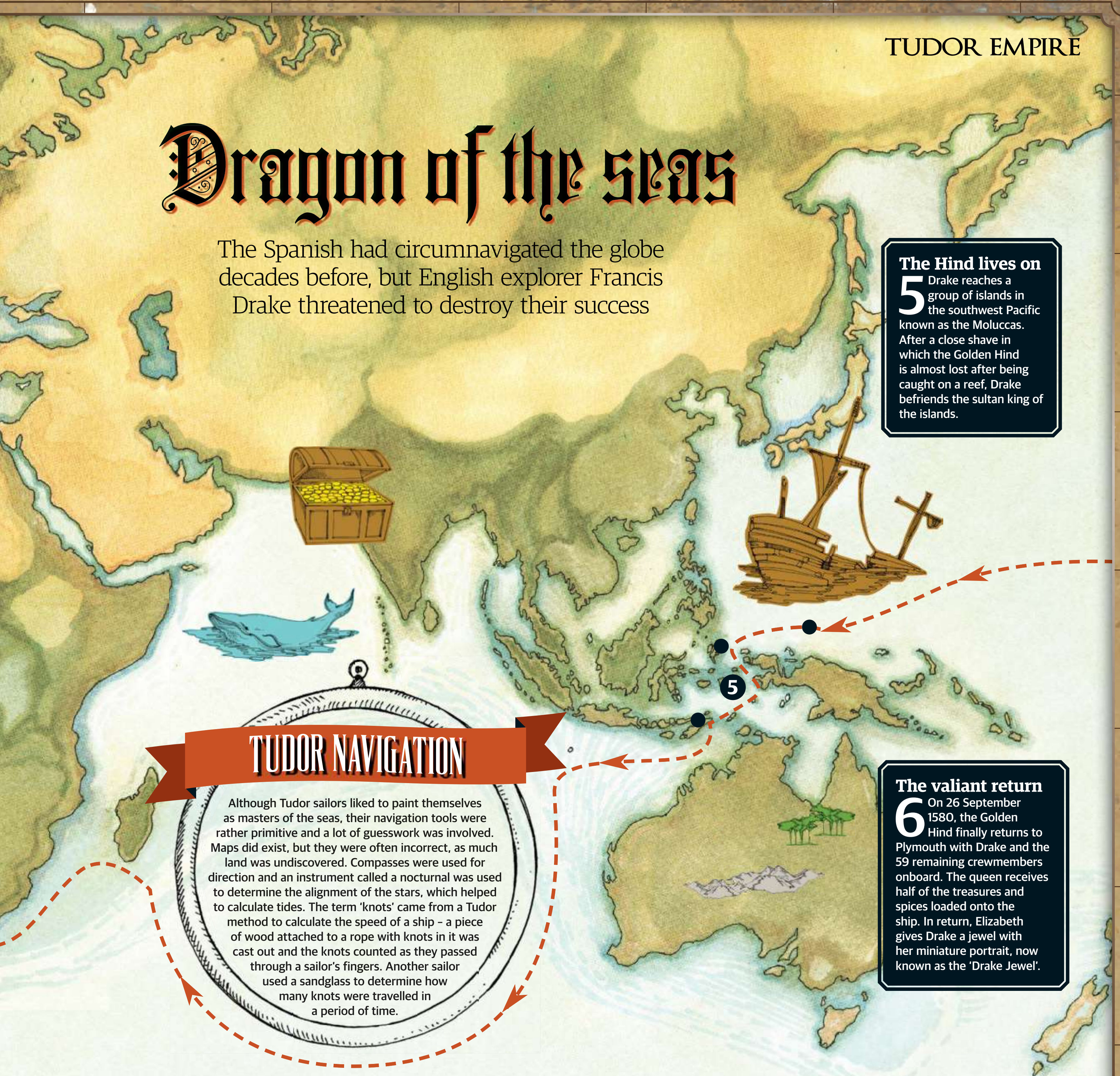
For many, Sir Francis Drake is a physical embodiment of the glories of Tudor England. But Drake himself was an entirely untypical hero. His birth was viewed so unremarkable that no one is sure exactly when it was. He came from a very ordinary family; he was the eldest of 12 sons, and his father was a farmer. When the Catholic Mary began to persecute Protestants, the family fled from Devonshire to Kent, where his father became a preacher. It seemed fate itself wished to place Drake on a ship, as he was apprenticed to their neighbour, and when the old, childless sailor died, he left his ship to his favourite pupil.

By the 1560s, the young Drake was making frequent trips to Africa. There, he would capture slaves and sell them in New Spain. This was against Spanish law and in 1568 his fleet was trapped by Spaniards in the Mexican port of San Juan de Ulua. Although Drake managed to escape, many of his men were killed. This incident instilled a deep hatred in Drake towards the Spanish crown that would last throughout his entire life.

In 1572 he received a privateer's commission from Elizabeth and set his sights on plundering any Spanish ship that crossed his path. He targeted wealthy Spanish-owned port towns and settlements, attacking them and claiming as much gold and silver as he could load on to his ships. It

Dragon of the seas

The Spanish had circumnavigated the globe decades before, but English explorer Francis Drake threatened to destroy their success



The Hind lives on

5 Drake reaches a group of islands in the southwest Pacific known as the Moluccas. After a close shave in which the Golden Hind is almost lost after being caught on a reef, Drake befriends the sultan king of the islands.

The valiant return

6 On 26 September 1580, the Golden Hind finally returns to Plymouth with Drake and the 59 remaining crewmembers onboard. The queen receives half of the treasures and spices loaded onto the ship. In return, Elizabeth gives Drake a jewel with her miniature portrait, now known as the 'Drake Jewel'.

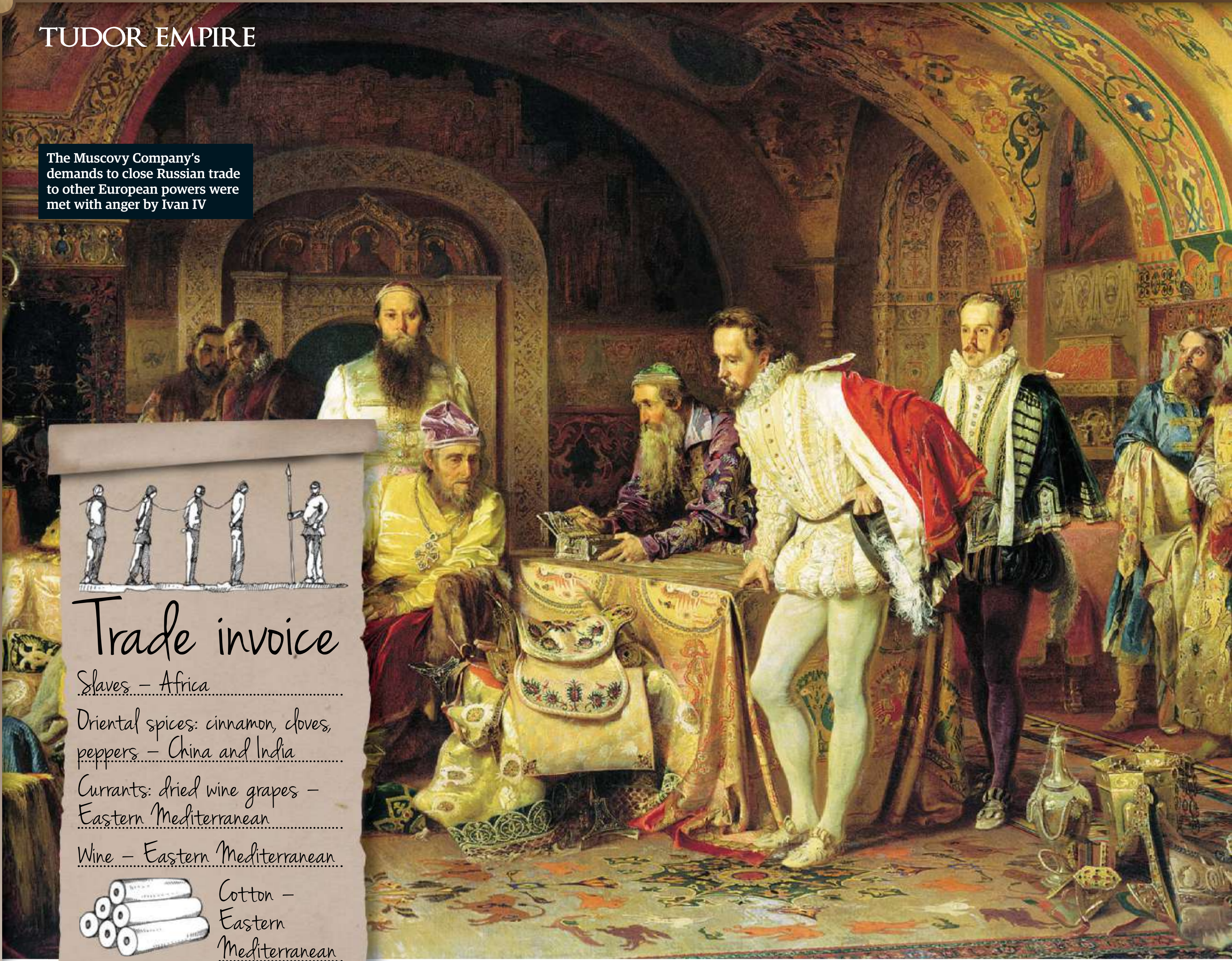
TUDOR NAVIGATION

Although Tudor sailors liked to paint themselves as masters of the seas, their navigation tools were rather primitive and a lot of guesswork was involved. Maps did exist, but they were often incorrect, as much land was undiscovered. Compasses were used for direction and an instrument called a nocturnal was used to determine the alignment of the stars, which helped to calculate tides. The term 'knots' came from a Tudor method to calculate the speed of a ship – a piece of wood attached to a rope with knots in it was cast out and the knots counted as they passed through a sailor's fingers. Another sailor used a sandglass to determine how many knots were travelled in a period of time.

was Drake who, when discovering that he had too much gold to carry, decided to bury it and reclaim it later. This was not the only comparison made between Drake and pirates. Although in England his success had seen him become a wealthy and respected explorer, this was not the case in Spain. To the Spaniards whose ships he had plundered, Drake became a bloodthirsty figure to be feared; they even gave him the terrifying nickname 'El Draque' – the Dragon.

Dragon or not, the daring and bountiful voyages of the English adventurer had impressed Queen Elizabeth I. He perfectly epitomised the kind of pioneering English spirit that she felt her country needed to ensure it became a major world power. In 1577, she sent Drake on an expedition against the Spanish along the Pacific coast of South America. He raided the Spanish settlements in his usual ruthless style and, after plundering Spanish ships along the coasts of Chile and Peru, he landed in California and claimed it for his queen. His journey continued through the Indian Ocean and when he finally returned to England on 26 September 1580, he became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the world. This delighted the queen, but what pleased her even more were the pretty jewels he bestowed her with. In a move that insulted the king of Spain, she dined onboard the explorer's ship, bestowed him with a jewel of her own and gave him a knighthood.

Drake's formidable success at the expense of Spain did not end there. In 1588 he was made vice admiral of the Navy, and when 130 Spanish Armada ships entered the English Channel, he fought them back with relish. Now, he wasn't only a wealthy explorer and royal favourite, he was also a war hero. However, in 1596 his luck finally ran out. The queen requested him to engage his old enemy Spain one last time and in a mission to capture the Spanish treasure in Panama, Drake contracted dysentery and died. His body was placed in a lead coffin and cast out to sea. His enduring legacy remains, and to this day divers continue to search for the coffin of the man who led Elizabethan England to glory.



The Muscovy Company's demands to close Russian trade to other European powers were met with anger by Ivan IV

Trade invoice

Slaves – Africa

Oriental spices: cinnamon, cloves, peppers – China and India

Currants: dried wine grapes – Eastern Mediterranean

Wine – Eastern Mediterranean

Cotton – Eastern Mediterranean

Silk – Eastern Mediterranean

Cordage – Russia

Hemp – Russia

Furs – Russia

Carpets – Turkey

Silk – Persia

Fruit – Mediterranean

Sugar – North Africa

Treasures of the empire

A world full of riches awaited to make England a wealthy and powerful nation once again

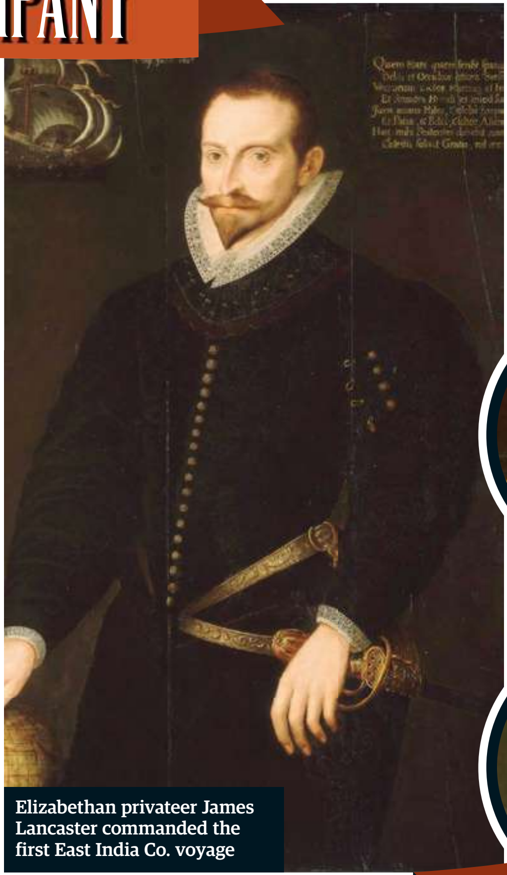
When it came to trade, England had some catching up to do. For a long time, Italian spice and dye traders dominated the seas, but the Italian monopoly that had existed on trade was finally broken by Spain and Portugal. In their efforts to loosen the Italian hold on trade, these traders discovered sea routes to the Indies and the hugely valuable spices that lay beyond. England looked on greedily as Spain grew wealthier and wealthier and became determined to share in the riches that were on offer in the New World. If England failed to get a foothold in the exploration of the New World, its European rivals would leave it behind and the nation would be left vulnerable. Trade didn't just mean riches anymore - it meant survival.

After an English spy gained a copy of *Breve Compendio De La Sphera*, a secret Spanish textbook that held the secrets to success at sea, craftsmen began designing new instruments and English explorers were finally ready to take to the waves. Queen Elizabeth supported the voyages of these intrepid explorers and expressed that she would not disapprove if they were to take advantage of richly laden Spanish ships while doing so. Soon, English adventurers gained a reputation for piracy, although the raids were conducted not by pirates but by 'privateers'. Spanish ships in the Caribbean trembled in terror upon the sight of an English galleon on the horizon. A new world was dawning, and using their cunning, daring and ruthlessness, English traders would come to rule it.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The tiny English company that came to control half of all the world's trade

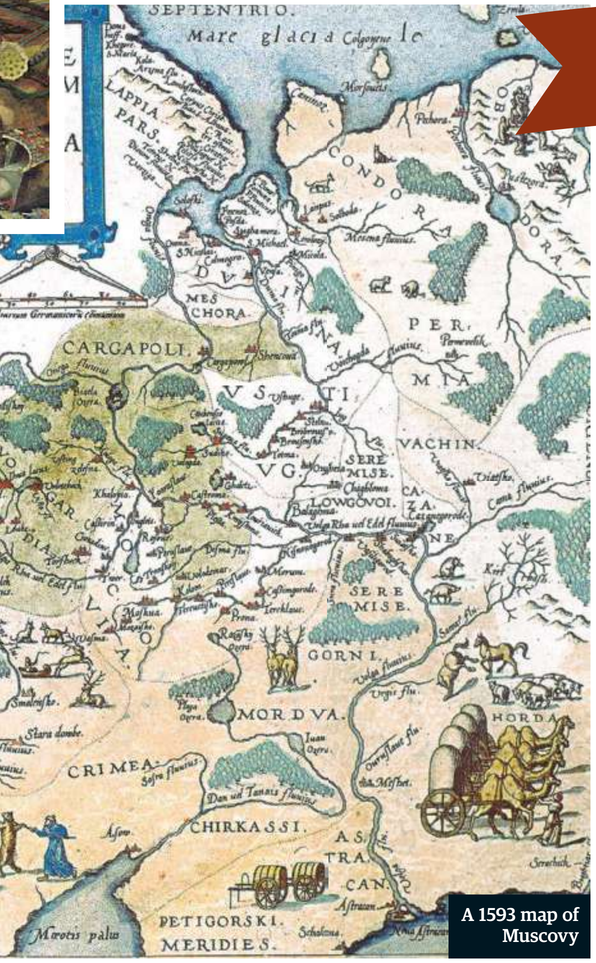
When Queen Elizabeth granted a Royal Charter to the traders that would become the East India Trading Company, it's doubtful she could foresee the impact it would have upon the world. The 15-year charter permitted the fledgling company a monopoly on trade with countries east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan, but they were motivated by one thing - spices. But the Dutch East India Company had the monopoly and the small English company had to work from the bottom up, slowly gaining income and respect. Eventually the company's trade in spices, cotton and silk saw profits pour in. Just 47 years after its creation, the little business morphed into a giant. For many, the pioneering nature of the company was symbolic of the spirit of exploration, tearing down the barriers of the world. But as the company became more powerful, its ambitions grew in kind. The initial focus on trade morphed into dangerous colonial aspirations that would lead to the company's eventual downfall.



Elizabethan privateer James Lancaster commanded the first East India Co. voyage

EXPANDING EAST

The East India Company weren't the only English traders to rule the seas



A 1593 map of Muscovy

Although the East India Trading Company was a major player in the arena of English trade, many other companies were making waves worldwide. The first major chartered joint stock company was the Muscovy Company, focusing on trade between England and Muscovy, modern-day Russia. Trading with this mysterious state in the frozen tundra involved perilous journeys that left one crew frozen, but when Richard Chancellor finally made it to Moscow he found a market eager to trade. English wool was exchanged for Russian fur and an array of valuable goods. The Muscovy Company even led to a marriage proposal from Ivan the Terrible to Elizabeth.

Another major English chartered company was the Levant, or Turkey, Company, drawn to the Ottoman empire by the lure of exotic spices. The Levant Company amassed a small fortune trading in silk and valuable currants. What set the Levant Company apart was that the leaders never appeared to have colonial ambitions, instead working closely with the sultan. This allowed for a relationship of mutual benefit.

Forgotten Tudor Explorers

The men whose voyages carved the world for England

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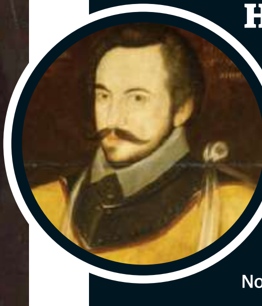

Humphrey Gilbert

1539-1583

Half brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, Gilbert's voyages established St John's Newfoundland, the most eastern province of Canada, in 1583. An early pioneer of the English colonial empire in North America, Gilbert initially sailed to find a sea route through North America to Asia.

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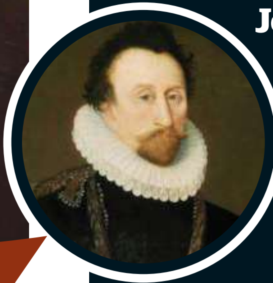

John Hawkins

1532-1595

Cousin of Francis Drake, Hawkins was not only chief architect of the Navy but also conducted several voyages to West Africa and South America. Hawkins was a trade pioneer and made a huge profit from the slave trade.

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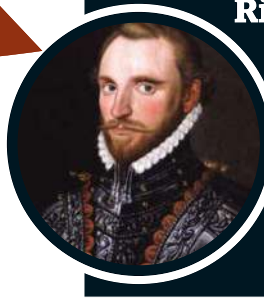

Richard Grenville

1542-1591

An English war hero, Grenville was a major part of early attempts to settle in the New World. He attempted to set up colonies in Roanoke Island and his daring death aboard his ship Revenge is immortalised in Tennyson's poem *The Revenge*.

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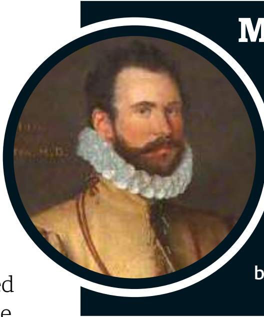

Martin Frobisher

1535/1539-1594

Frobisher was determined to find a north-west passage as a trade route to India and China, and made three voyages in an effort to do so. The privateer collected what he believed was 1,550 tons of gold, but actually turned out to be worthless iron pyrite.

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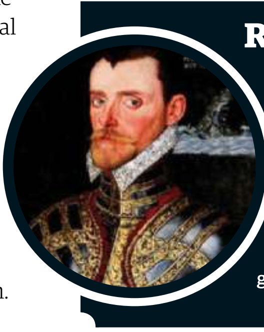


Richard Hawkins

1562-1622

Son of John Hawkins, he set sail to prey on the possessions of the Spanish crown in South America. Although his plundering of Spanish towns strongly suggest otherwise, he maintained that the purpose of the expedition was geographical discovery.

© Alamy; Look & Learn; Joe Cummings; Abigail Daker

Day in the life

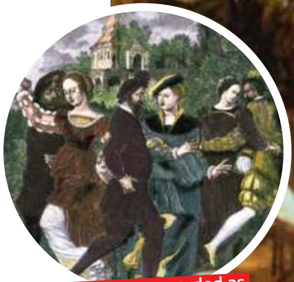
A TUDOR MUSICIAN

PURVEYORS OF MUSIC AND BEAUTY IN THE RENAISSANCE, ENGLAND, 1485-1603

The Tudor dynasty introduced a period of great cultural and artistic change in England, known as the English Renaissance. Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I were both huge supporters of arts and music, transforming their courts into centres of artistic innovation. As the monarchy's interest in music increased, the country quickly followed suit and all young men of nobility were expected to be able to play an instrument. Skilled musicians were sought after throughout the country and from the royal courts to small village fetes, the everyday life of a Tudor musician was busy, varied and fulfilling.

PROVIDE MUSIC FOR MORNING EXERCISE

Dancing was a popular form of exercise in Tudor England, enjoyed by the royal family. Every morning, court musicians would provide the soundtrack to the morning dance, and the new kinds of music played by the musicians led to the creation of many new court dances. Queen Elizabeth I especially enjoyed dancing and employed 70 musicians to play for her.



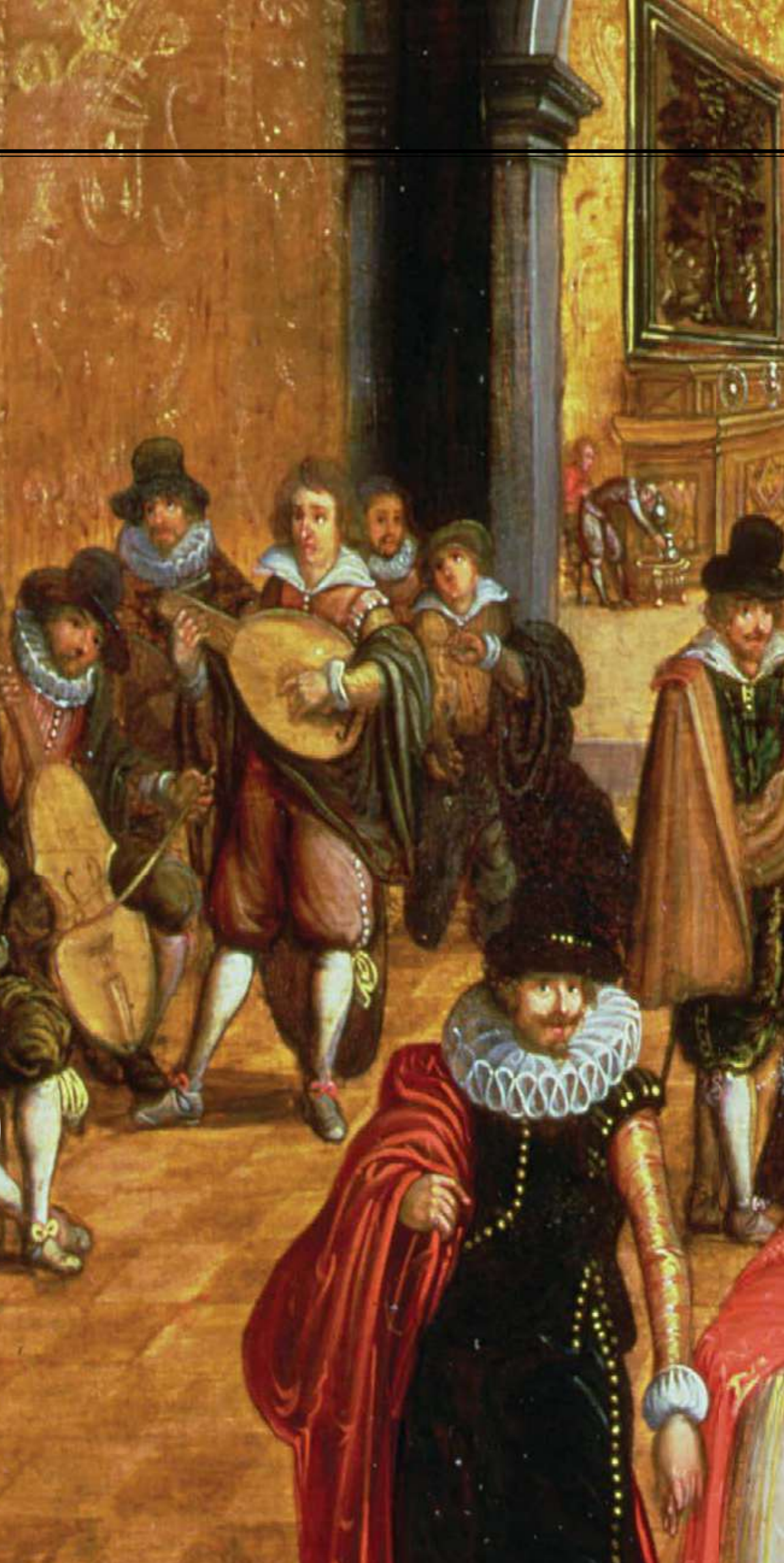
Dancing was regarded as exercise to refine both the body and mind

PLAY IN CHURCH

Religion was hugely important - and volatile - during the Tudor era, as Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and formed the Church of England, which threw the country into turmoil, with frequent shifts between Catholic and Protestant leaders. Many jobs opened for musicians within the church as choirmasters, singers and to play instruments during masses. Almost 80 musicians served Henry VIII in the Chapel Royal and accompanied him around the country.

TEACH CLASSES

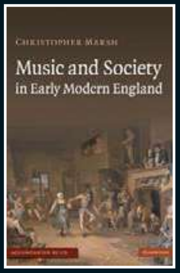
The skill to play an instrument was highly valued in the court of the Tudor monarchs, so noble families were eager for their children to be taught the art. It was common for musicians to spend time teaching in schools and universities and members of the royal family often received one-on-one tutoring with music teachers.



The first English string quartet, the English consort, emerged in the Tudor era and featured a violin, flute, lute and viol

How do we know this?

The book *Patrons And Musicians Of The English Renaissance* provides a study of the emergence of a music profession as well as the social environment that helped to nurture it. It also explores the relationship between patrons and their musicians. Also helpful was the text *Music And Society In Early Modern England*, a comprehensive study of the multiple roles of musicians which utilises sources such as ballads, court records, diaries and wills from the era.



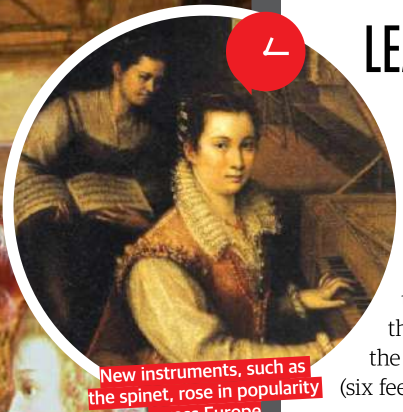
CHRISTOPHER MARSH

Music and Society in Early Modern England

> “Many jobs opened for musicians within the church as choirmasters, singers and to play instruments”

PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT AT A PUBLIC GATHERING

Music was enjoyed by the rich and poor alike and each town had a band of musicians known as waites. A wait would play their own original music at public occasions, welcome royal visitors by playing at the town gates and even wake townsfolk on dark winter mornings by playing beneath their windows. Street musicians or travelling minstrels, however, were looked down upon.



New instruments, such as the spinet, rose in popularity across Europe

LEARN A NEW INSTRUMENT

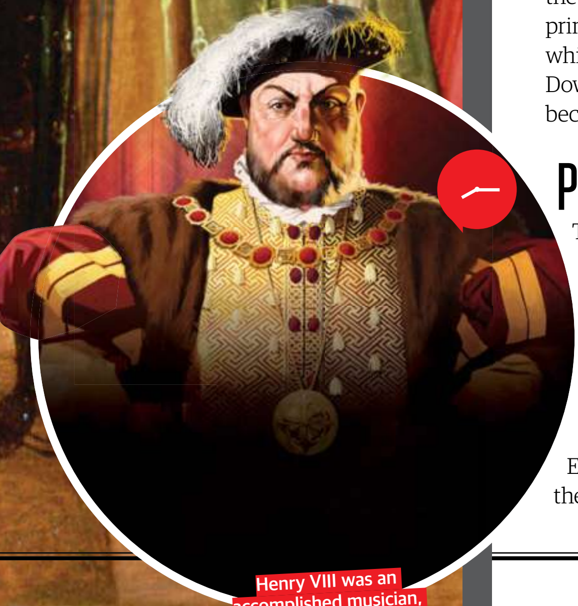
Many new instruments emerged in the Tudor period and it was essential that musicians kept up with the current trends. These new instruments included the hautboy - an early form of the oboe and the viol - an early violin. New versions of the ever-popular lute also emerged, such as the chitarrone lute, which was 183 centimetres (six feet) tall.

COMPOSE A SYMPHONY

The introduction of new instruments helped to create a new, refined sound, and these instruments were used in combination to produce unique music, an immediate precursor to the modern orchestra. This led to the emergence of talented Tudor composers such as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, who received fame and popularity for their work.

GET WORK PRINTED

The Tudor period introduced the publishing of music to a market of amateur, would-be musicians. A musician who wished to publish their work would first have to receive special permission from the monarch. Music and song lyrics were both printed, however they would be sold separately, which proved to be a lucrative practice as John Dowland’s *First Booke Of Songes Of Ayres* quickly became a best-seller.



Henry VIII was an accomplished musician, composer and dancer

PLAY FOR THE ROYAL COURT

The Tudor monarchs were great supporters of the arts and music. Queen Elizabeth I was a patron of all the arts and actively encouraged artists, actors and musicians, while Henry VIII was a talented musician himself, able to play a multitude of instruments. The court transformed into a celebration of musical culture, drawing the best musicians from England and other parts of the world, to play for the aristocracy.

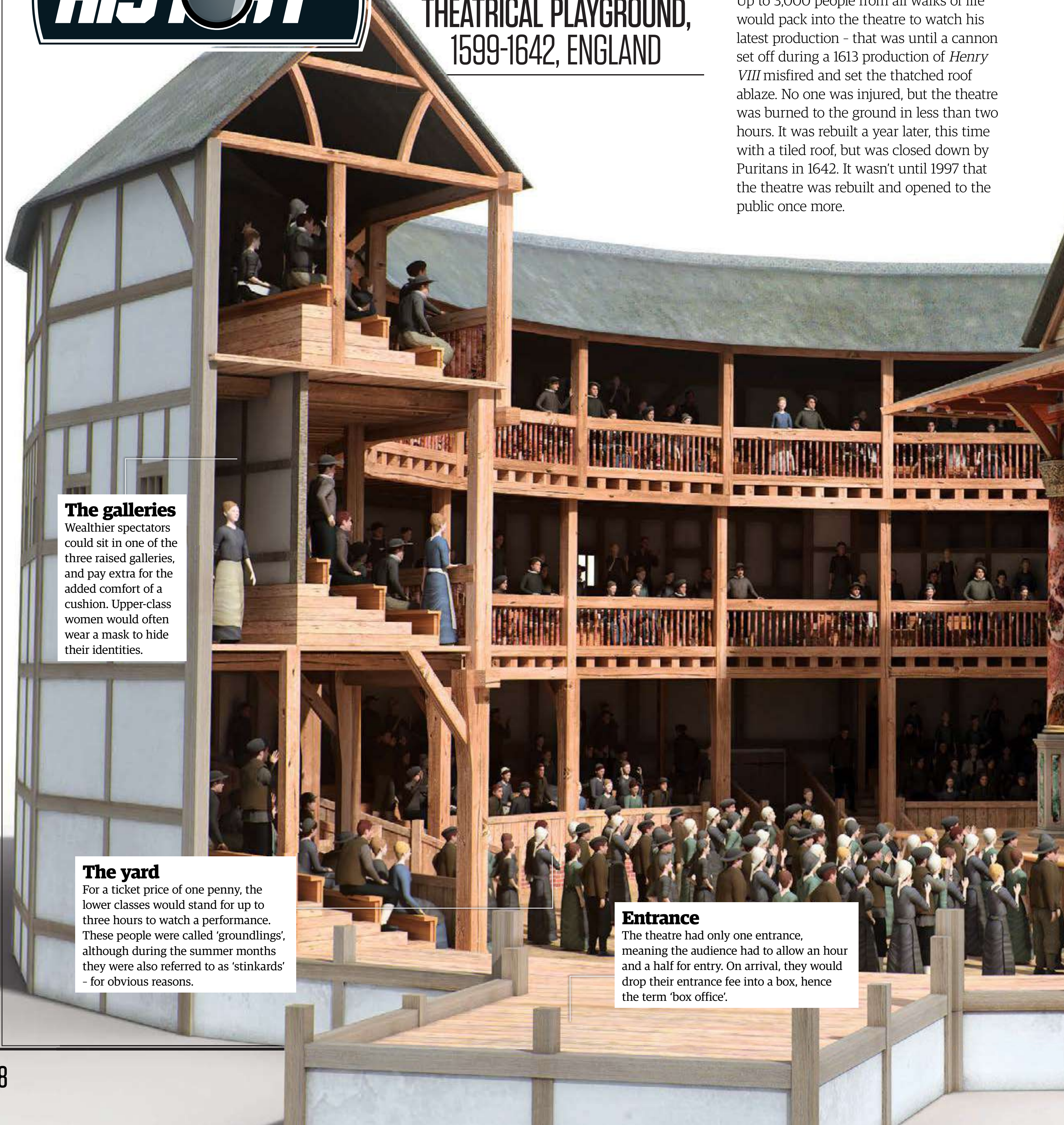
© Getty; Alamy

INSIDE HISTORY

THE GLOBE

SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRICAL PLAYGROUND, 1599-1642, ENGLAND

One of the first purpose-built theatres in London, this open-air building is best known for its links with the most famous playwright in history, William Shakespeare. Its construction was funded by his playing company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and Shakespeare himself was one of four actors who bought a share in the Globe. Up to 3,000 people from all walks of life would pack into the theatre to watch his latest production – that was until a cannon set off during a 1613 production of *Henry VIII* misfired and set the thatched roof ablaze. No one was injured, but the theatre was burned to the ground in less than two hours. It was rebuilt a year later, this time with a tiled roof, but was closed down by Puritans in 1642. It wasn't until 1997 that the theatre was rebuilt and opened to the public once more.

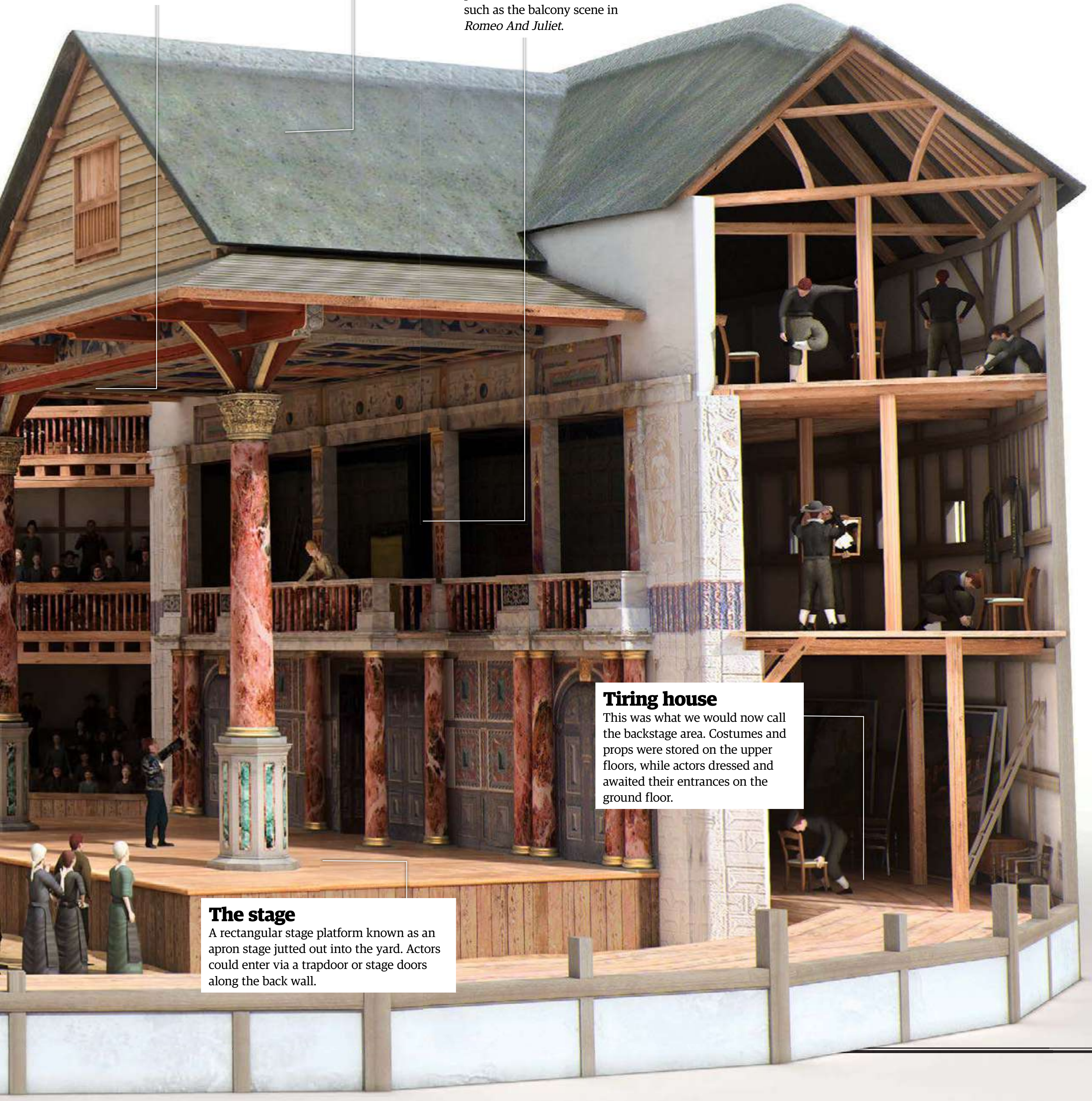


The galleries
Wealthier spectators could sit in one of the three raised galleries, and pay extra for the added comfort of a cushion. Upper-class women would often wear a mask to hide their identities.

The yard
For a ticket price of one penny, the lower classes would stand for up to three hours to watch a performance. These people were called 'groundlings', although during the summer months they were also referred to as 'stinkards' – for obvious reasons.

Entrance
The theatre had only one entrance, meaning the audience had to allow an hour and a half for entry. On arrival, they would drop their entrance fee into a box, hence the term 'box office'.

> “Up to 3,000 people from all walks of life would pack into the theatre”



The heavens
The ceiling under the stage roof was known as the ‘heavens’, and would have been painted to look like a sky. A trap door in the ceiling allowed actors to drop down onto the stage using a rope.

Roof
The original Globe had a thatched roof that covered the gallery areas and stage, protecting the actors and wealthier spectators from the elements. After a fire destroyed the theatre, it was rebuilt with a less flammable tiled roof.

Balcony
This was where the musicians performed. It could also be used for scenes performed over two levels, such as the balcony scene in *Romeo And Juliet*.

Tiring house
This was what we would now call the backstage area. Costumes and props were stored on the upper floors, while actors dressed and awaited their entrances on the ground floor.

The stage
A rectangular stage platform known as an apron stage jutted out into the yard. Actors could enter via a trapdoor or stage doors along the back wall.

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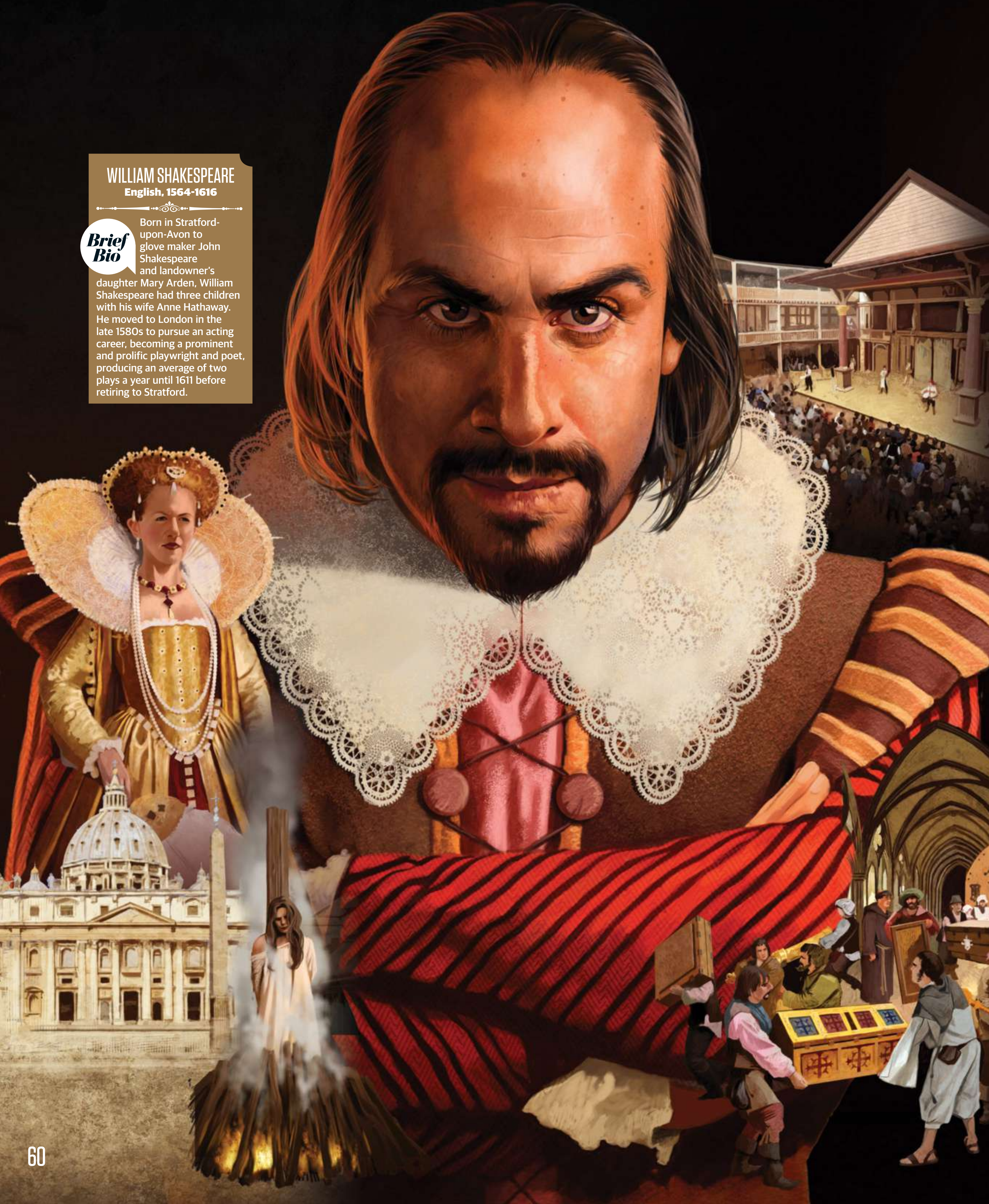


WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

English, 1564-1616

Brief Bio

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon to glove maker John Shakespeare and landowner's daughter Mary Arden, William Shakespeare had three children with his wife Anne Hathaway. He moved to London in the late 1580s to pursue an acting career, becoming a prominent and prolific playwright and poet, producing an average of two plays a year until 1611 before retiring to Stratford.

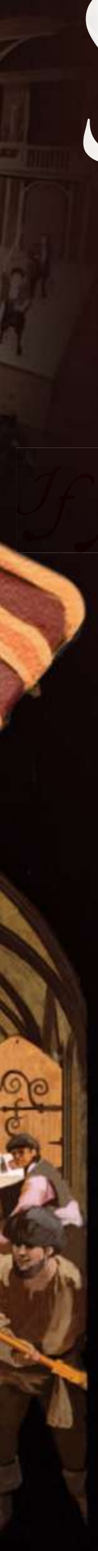
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twig
Is straight and slender and as brown in hue
As hazel nuts, and sweeter than the kernels.
Oh, let me see thee walk! Thou dost not halt.

Rebel with a cause
SHAKESPEARE

He may be England's most celebrated writer, but did Shakespeare hide codes and double meanings in his work to subvert the establishment during a time of religious turmoil?

Written by David Crookes

If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great



Two guards grabbed him tightly and dragged him down a stone corridor, his shackled legs meaning he was unable to keep up the frantic pace they had set. He was determined to show no sign of weakness and tried to concentrate on the senses around him, such as the rats scurrying by his feet, the insects crawling on the walls and the warmth on his face from the burning torches that illuminated the short path.

How had things come to this? He was Robert Southwell, born into a good family and a man who devoted his life to God, being ordained a priest in 1584 in Rome. But what had been one of the best years of his life had also turned into one of the most bitter when later the same year, the 'Jesuits, etc Act' had ordered all Roman Catholic priests to leave England. They were given 40 days' grace to do so and many of his friends had hurriedly scrambled their belongings together and fled the island nation for friendlier shores. These were difficult times to be a Catholic in England.

Pain ripped through his body as the guards swung him around a corner and flung open a new cell door for him. Looking at the horrible conditions his mind raced back. Damn that Henry VIII, he thought. Damn him and his desire for a male heir and his lust for Anne Boleyn that had seen him turn his back on the Catholic faith he had been brought up in. And damn that German monk Martin Luther whose actions had led the Protestant Reformation that had swept through Europe and ultimately been adopted throughout England.

Southwell was levered inside the cramped, dank space. He recognised it from the descriptions of others whose fate had brought them here; it was Limbo, the most feared cell within Newgate Prison, inside a gate in the Roman London Wall. The door closed and the guards walked away. His heart beating wildly with fear, he reflected on his decision to leave Rome in 1586 to travel back to England to work as a Jesuit missionary, staying with numerous Catholic families, thus becoming a wanted man.

Eventually, the door swung open and he was dragged out of his cramped cell. He could barely stand as he was taken to trial, hauled before Lord Chief Justice John Popham and indicted as a traitor. He defiantly laid out his position, admitted to being a priest and his sentence was passed. He was, Popham said, to be hanged, drawn and quartered. After being beaten on the journey through London's streets he was forced to stand. His head was placed in a noose and he was briefly hanged. Cut down while still alive, his bowels were removed before his beating heart was dragged from his body and he was cut into four pieces. His severed head was held aloft. This was England in the late-16th century – Queen Elizabeth's religious compromise wasn't without its share of pain and suffering.

This was the world William Shakespeare lived in as he wrote his great works. He had moved to London from Stratford-upon-Avon in 1587, leaving behind his young family to pursue a career as an actor and a playwright with the troupe Lord Strange's Men. He had married Anne Hathaway in 1582, when he was 18 and she was 26, and together they had three children, Susanna, Hamnet and Judith. But the lure of the stage had been too strong to ignore.

It had not taken Shakespeare long to make a name for himself. His first play, *Henry VI, Part 1*, written in 1591, made its debut a year later. It was successful enough to make fellow playwrights jealous. One of them was Robert Greene, arguably the first professional author in England. Unlike Shakespeare, he was university educated and urged his friends not to give Shakespeare any work, calling him an 'upstart crow.' Shakespeare was unmoved by such words. It would be, academics conferred later, a sign he was making his mark.

By 1594, he had written more plays and seen both *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrese* published. He dedicated them to his patron Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton. He liked the Earl. Southampton was from a long Catholic dynasty and he appreciated poetry and theatre. When the theatres re-opened in 1594 following an outbreak of bubonic plague, he was keen to invite the Earl along. After all, Shakespeare's new troupe, Lord Chamberlain's Men, was becoming popular, with them even invited to perform in the royal court of Queen Elizabeth I. Shakespeare had also bought shares in Lord Chamberlain's Men and was becoming a powerful and influential figure.

The Reformation had changed England's approach to religion, moving the country away from its Catholic roots and into the arms of Protestantism. But it had not been as peaceful a transition as is sometimes painted. Protest leaders who encouraged more than 30,000 priests, gentry and commoners to demand a return to Catholicism in 1536 had been executed. Two years later, reformers had banished the cult of saints, destroying shrines and banning the population of England from making pilgrimages. Riots in 1549 were repressed in the most vicious of ways – the reformers would hang priests from church towers and lop off the heads of laymen who refused to obey the new order.

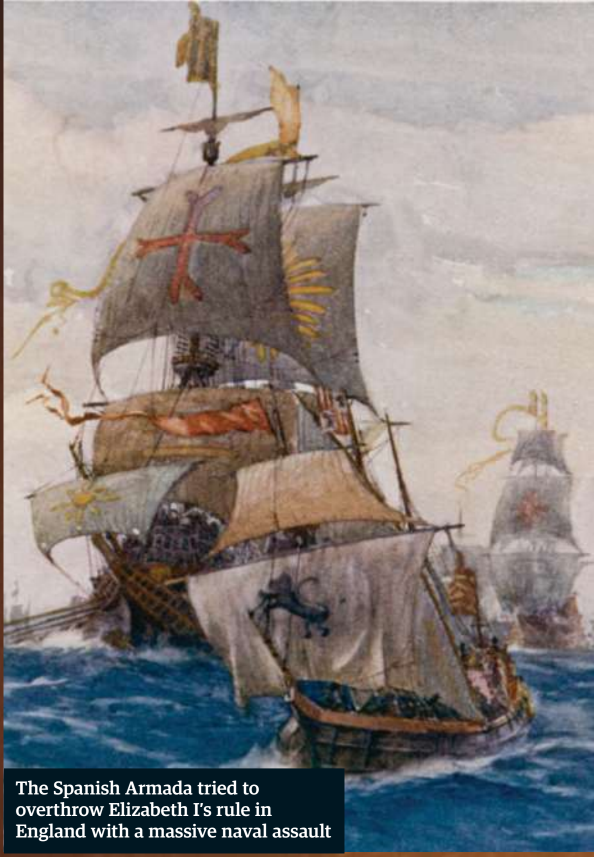
All this affected the Bard; he wasn't writing in a bubble and nor were the actors who performed his work. Clare Asquith states in *Shadowplay: the Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare*: "Shakespeare's family are thought to have been Catholics [...] his early years would have echoed to angry discussions of the impact of fines and imprisonments, the liberties taken by the Queen's commissioners, the wreckage under Edward and the wicked errors of the old King."

Speaking out against the establishment was hard – not least for those who wanted to keep their heads. Anyone wanting to put across another point of view had to be smart and Asquith believes the man who would go on to be England's most celebrated poet and playwright rebelled and devised a secret code, inserting messages and double meaning into his writing. It isn't as outlandish as it may sound; cryptology had been used since ancient times and there were examples of secret codes being used in this time period. For example, it is known that Mary, Queen of Scots used a cipher secretary called Gilbert Curle to handle her secret correspondence. It wasn't entirely sophisticated, though, so her plot to overthrow Elizabeth was soon uncovered – Catholic double agent Gilbert Gifford intercepted letters that had been smuggled out in casks of ale and reported them to Sir Francis Walsingham, who had created a school for espionage.

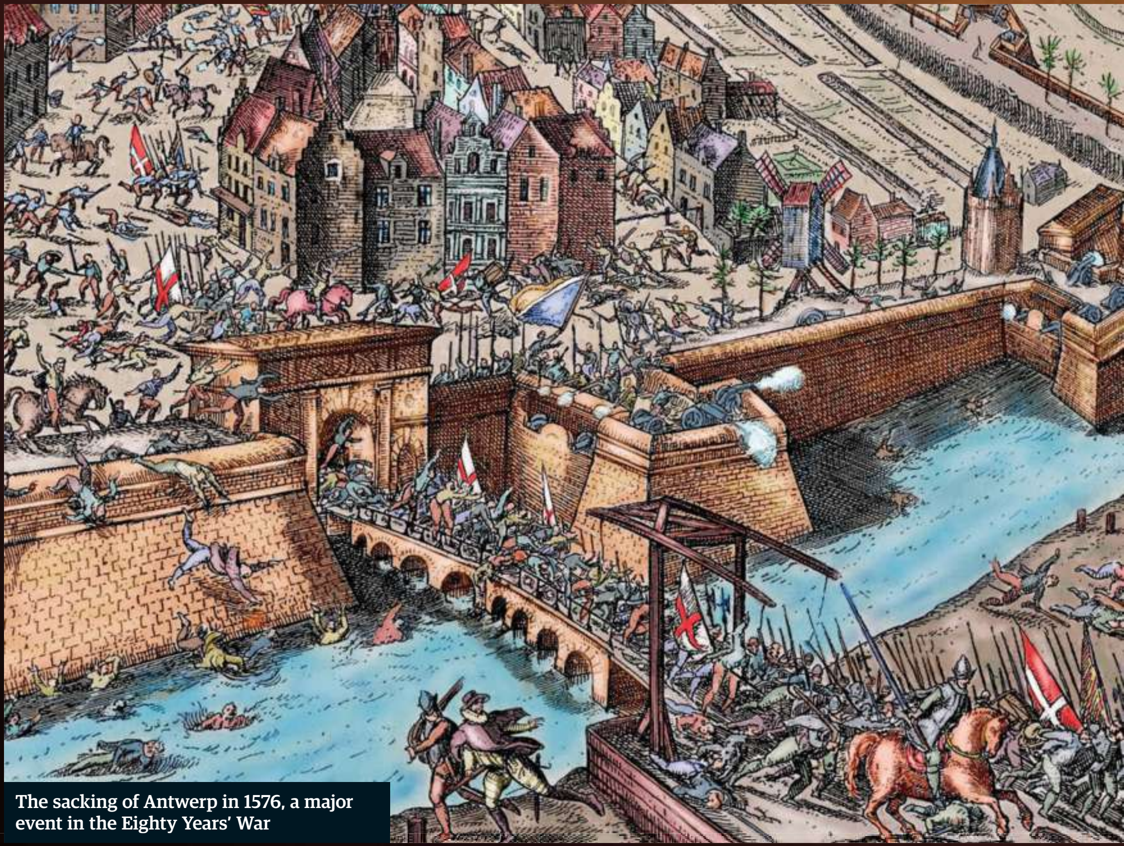
For Catholics, certain words and key phrases stood out. For example, 'tempest' or 'storm' were used to signify England's troubles, according to Asquith. So Shakespeare may well have been convinced he could change people's view of the world by writing on an entertainment and political and religious level.

First he had to work out exactly what message he wanted to put across. Philip II of Spain, who had married Mary I, felt England's Catholics had been abandoned and there had long been a promise that, if the Catholics bided their time, help would come. Relations between Spain and England had declined to an all-new low. This culminated in the sailing of 122 ships from Spain in 1588 with the aim of the Spanish Armada being to overthrow Elizabeth I and replace the Protestant regime.

> "Queen Elizabeth's religious compromise wasn't without its share of pain"



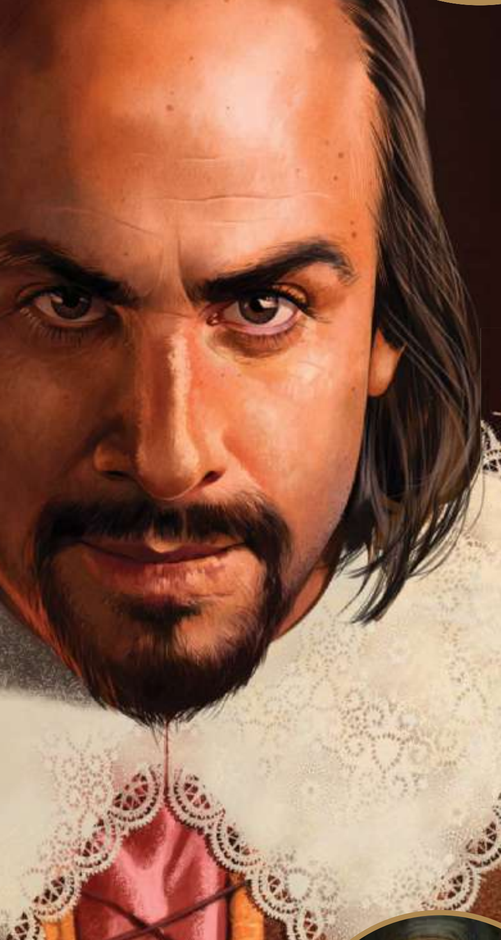
The Spanish Armada tried to overthrow Elizabeth I's rule in England with a massive naval assault

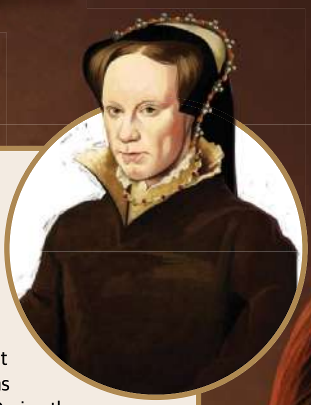


The sacking of Antwerp in 1576, a major event in the Eighty Years' War

SHAKESPEARE'S PRESSURES AND INFLUENCES

What were the factors which helped, motivated and threatened to break the Bard?





Religion

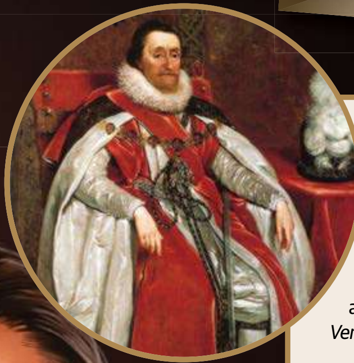
With the death of Mary I and the accession of her half sister Elizabeth I, the religion of England changed. Elizabeth took the country towards Protestantism. It is hard to overstate just how an important part of everyday life religion was during Shakespeare's lifetime. During the course of the Bard's life people believed so strongly in either Catholicism or Protestantism that they refused to recant their beliefs even when they were burned alive at the stake.

Politics

Two main forces were at play during Shakespeare's lifetime in England: the monarch and religion. The monarch held ultimate power over the life of their citizens, literally the power of life and death. Staying on the right side of those in power was obviously a strong influence on the Bard and his plays as it was vital for his career and for his life that he remained in the good graces of those in power.

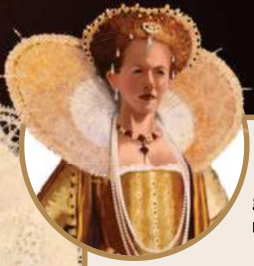
Social mobility

For centuries, English society had been a feudal one with a very clear distinction between the upper and the lower classes. During the Bard's lifetime, this began to change and a middle class was beginning to emerge – social mobility was increasing, meaning you no longer had to born a peer to become a person of wealth and influence. Shakespeare himself is an example of this as, although born to a good family, he climbed the social strata through his success. His own social mobility and that going on around him was an influence on his work.



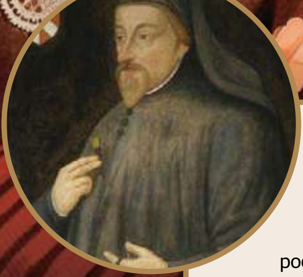
James I

Previously James VI, King of Scotland, the union of the Scottish and English crowns made him the ruler of both countries, as well as Ireland. He solidified Protestantism and sanctioned the *King James Version* of the *Bible* in 1611. James was a great admirer of poetry, drama and art and it is believed Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* to win his favour and, much as he did with Elizabeth, sometimes wrote to flatter one of his main patrons. Formally the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the Bard's troupe changed their name to The King's Company and received more money and performed more regularly for James than they had for Elizabeth.



Elizabeth I

One of England's golden monarchs returned England to Protestantism but allowed some Catholic traditions to continue and argued for greater toleration than her sister Mary had. Much of her reign coexisted with that of Shakespeare and the Bard and his work became known to the queen and she became one of his patrons. She was undoubtedly a major influence on him and some of his poems and plays contained passages directly aimed at pleasing her.



Playwrights and poets

Like all creative writers, Shakespeare was heavily influenced by the great writers that had gone before him. Chaucer, one of England's greatest poets, was a major influence as seen by the fact that several of the Bard's works were based on Chaucer poems. Greek writer Plutarch also provided inspiration for his works and Shakespeare sometimes copied whole passages of his work, with only minor alterations.

The Armada was defeated but it had succeeded in creating further religious and political divisions, so the authorities were on even greater alert. Within this world Shakespeare got to work and, at first, kept things simple. "My reading is that the early plays were light, comical, critical and oppositional, written for Lord Strange's Men", asserts Asquith. The earliest plays addressed political reunion and spiritual revival. Their plots related to divided families, parallels for an England cut in two.

Asquith believes the Bard placed certain markers in his texts that signalled a second, hidden meaning. He would use opposing words such as 'fair' and 'dark' and 'high' and 'low': 'fair' and 'high' being indications of Catholicism while 'dark' and 'low' would indicate Protestantism. Asquith takes this as reference to the black clothes worn by Puritans and to the 'high' church services that would include mass as opposed to the 'low' services that didn't. If this theory is true - a matter of some debate - then it enabled Shakespeare to get specific messages across, using characters to signify the two sides and by using words commonly associated with Catholic codes. For example, according to the theory, 'love' is divided into human and spiritual and 'tempest' refers to the turbulence of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the Bard used his own terms to disguise a message that was pro-Catholic.

At the same time, Shakespeare was operating in establishment circles. "He was drawn into the orbit of the court and wrote elegant pleas for toleration to Elizabeth, in the elaborate allegorical language she was used to", says Asquith. But England was becoming more violent again. Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, rebelled against Elizabeth I, becoming Robert, Earl of Essex's lieutenant in an attempt to raise the people of London against the government. The Essex faction had ordered a performance of the 'deposition' play *Richard II* just before the rebellion and Shakespeare's company had their work cut out afterward denying complicity. The plan ended in failure in 1601, but in that same year, Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, encouraging action against unjust rule. "His more critical work supported the cause of the Earl of Essex against the [William] Cecil regime", says Asquith. If this is true, then Shakespeare really was one of the defining rebels of the period.

Critics have said for decades that the writer was against populist rebellions and supported authority and the rule of law, "but with the recent reassessment of the extent of dissidence at the end of Elizabeth's reign, Shakespeare's Elizabethan work begins to seem more oppositional", Asquith argues.

"What if the authority he upholds was not that of the breakaway Tudor state, but of the European church against which Henry VIII rebelled?" she asks. "What if he sympathised with the intellectual Puritan reformers, who felt secular monarchs like the Tudors had no business assuming spiritual authority over individual conscience? What if he, like so many contemporaries, opposed the destruction of the old English landscape, from the hostels,

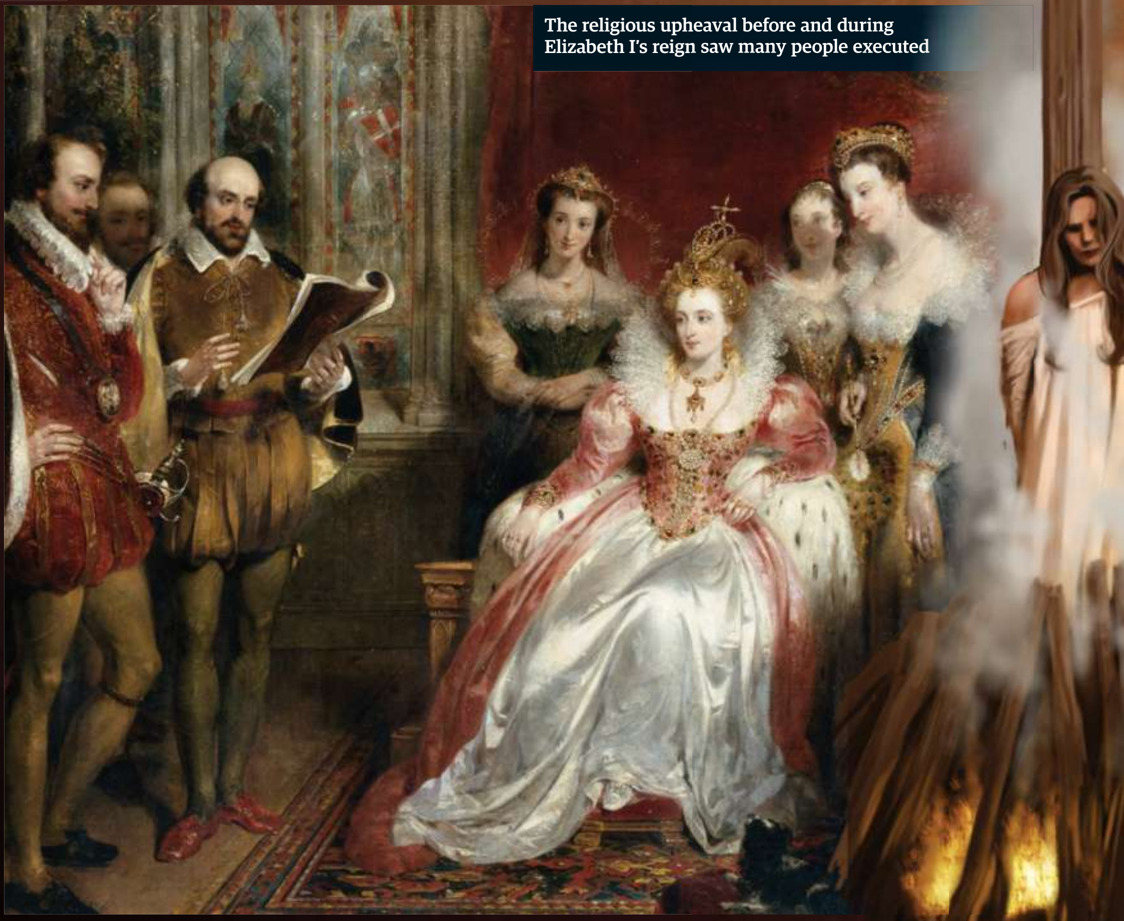
> "He devised a secret code, inserting messages and double meaning into his writing"

RELIGIOUS COMPROMISE?

With the untimely death of King Edward VI in 1553, struck with fever and cough that gradually worsened, Mary I ascended to the throne and set about calling a halt to the Reformation. She swung England firmly back towards Catholicism, causing reformers to run scared and flee. Among those displaced was civil servant William Cecil, his relief of a lucky escape palpable as he heard of the 273 Protestants burnt to death under Mary's reign. Terror had been brought on the Protestants but Cecil had the ear of Elizabeth, who he had known for years. She had embraced the Church of England, so much that she had been imprisoned for two months in the Tower of London by her half-sister Mary, who feared she was part of a plot to depose her.

When Mary died in 1558, Cecil wanted to return to a Protestant England. Queen Elizabeth succeeded the throne since Mary had born no child and Cecil became her advisor. Within the year, a uniform state religion had returned. Elizabeth was confirmed as Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

The Act of Uniformity in 1558 set the order of prayer in the *English Book of Common Prayer.* Crucifixes and candlesticks were to be allowed, although new bishops protested. But Protestants who had fled returned and wanted their religion to be supreme. Cecil ensured Catholics would be excluded from public life although he allowed them to worship as long as they did not threaten the queen and did so discreetly. Catholics who rose would be dealt with in the most serious of ways.



The religious upheaval before and during Elizabeth I's reign saw many people executed

CODEBREAKING THE BARD'S PLAYS

Claire Asquith on the secret codes she believes are imbued within Shakespeare's works

TITUS ANDRONICUS

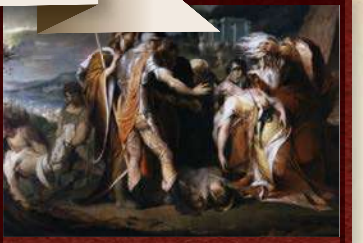
Synopsis: Written between 1588 and 1593, the play is set in the latter days of the Roman Empire. Bloody in the extreme, the play explores the life of a fictional Roman general, Titus, caught in a vicious circle of revenge with the queen of the Goths, Tamora.

Rebel? Shakespeare appears to be pleading for calm among England's dissidents, having written a play that highlights suffering and repression while arguing the case against a violent rebellion. The message, claims Asquith, is very much about biding time, waiting for help in the guise of a promised invasion and, as such, it mirrored the rhetoric of Catholic leaders who stressed England would be saved via diplomacy or invasion rather than an internal uprising. "It is a gory portrayal of just the kind of state atrocities conducted in the mid-1590s, and in the previous reign as well. Yet it discourages equally bloody revenge", says Asquith.

TAMING OF THE SHREW

Synopsis: Written between 1590 and 1592, the courtship of Petruchio is at the heart of the play. It shows his attempts to tame the wild Katherina, a girl he loves but is rebuffed by until he manages to win her over.

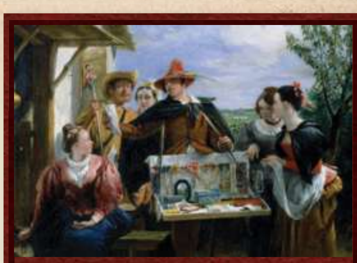
Rebel? Displaying evidence of the 'high-low' opposition language that Shakespeare used to refer to Catholics and Protestants, Katherina is "brown in hue." Her sister is called Bianca, meaning 'white' and she is the respectable one of the two. This paints Katherina to be like a reformer and in need of being brought into line. Asquith says the "oddly political language" used by the chastened shrew is "meant to alert us to the play's secondary level." For those accustomed to finding deeper meanings, the message would have been obvious, according to her. She says: "The play shows England as a warring family, the monarch helpless to stop vengeful puritans baiting afflicted Catholics."



KING LEAR

Synopsis: The tragedy is set in the court of an ageing monarch. He wants to pass the monarchy to his three daughters and asks them to prove they love him the best but one cannot so he splits it between two before falling into madness.

Rebel? Lear's actions caused a tumbling effect as various people were banished, reunited, imprisoned and heartbroken. Asquith claims this is an "unvarnished dramatisation of the state of James' England, a final attempt to awaken the King to the intolerable humiliations and sufferings of his Catholic subjects." She tells us the message within is clear: "If you exile true Christian spirituality – and both puritans and Catholics were exiled – the country descends into amoral anarchy." She adds: "It is worth noticing that though he discourages mob-led rebellion, he includes nine invasions in his work, and they are all portrayed as positive events."



THE WINTER'S TALE

Synopsis: Suspicious that his childhood friend is his pregnant wife's lover, Leontes accuses his wife of infidelity and having an illegitimate child. Having ordered the newborn baby to be abandoned, he is later reunited with her, much to his delight.

Rebel? With the play believed to have been written in 1611, this was one of Shakespeare's later plays and it appears to contain a strong message: "After all the post-reformation trauma, the spirituality that was lost turns out to have been secretly preserved", says Asquith. As with *The Tempest*, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* started with suffering and ended with happiness. It showed a transition that could put past remorse to bed, highlighting the possibility that evils can be defeated and overcome and that a true home can be found for spiritualism if it is wanted. It would have encouraged the audience to keep the faith and not give up hope.

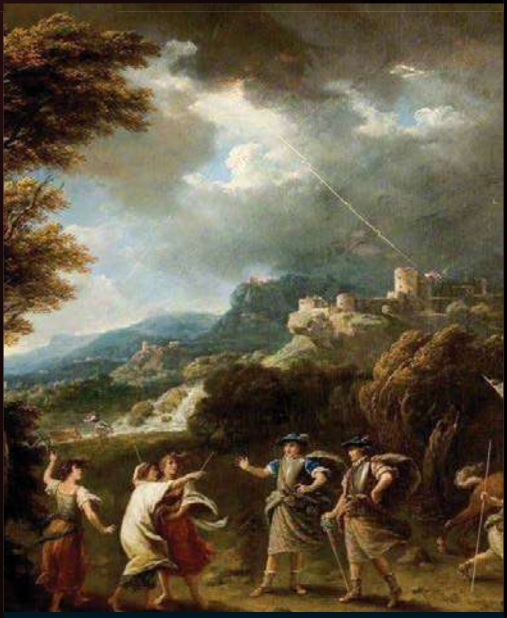
colleges, monasteries and hospitals to the rich iconography of churches to local roadside shrines and holy wells?"

It can be argued that the Bard personified England itself so that he could explore just why the ideas behind the Reformation had taken hold, presenting it as gullible and deluded, willing to turn its back on spiritual heritage, with the play *Two Gentlemen Of Verona* cited as evidence of this. The more elaborate plays retained the puns, wordplay and double meanings so beloved of audiences in Elizabethan times, but Asquith notes that some of Shakespeare's characters came to be increasingly dramatic and allegorical; they had a hidden spiritual meaning that transcended the literal sense of the text.

When King James assumed the throne in 1603, Catholics had assumed that he would lend them greater support than Elizabeth, given that his mother was a staunch Catholic. But that was not to be and Shakespeare must have been well aware of a growing political and religious resentment against the monarchy, with a feeling of rebellion growing. His plays in this period became more cynical, which some have speculated was a consequence of the world he was living in.

Matters came to a head with an explosive event in 1605. Five conspirators, Guy Fawkes, Thomas Wintour, Everard Digby and Thomas Percy hired a cellar beneath the Houses of Parliament for a few weeks, spending time gathering gunpowder and storing it in their newly acquired space. Their plan was to blow the building sky high, taking parliamentarians and King James I with it. But their cover was blown and Guy Fawkes was taken away to be tortured into confession, the deadly rack being the instrument said to have broken him. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

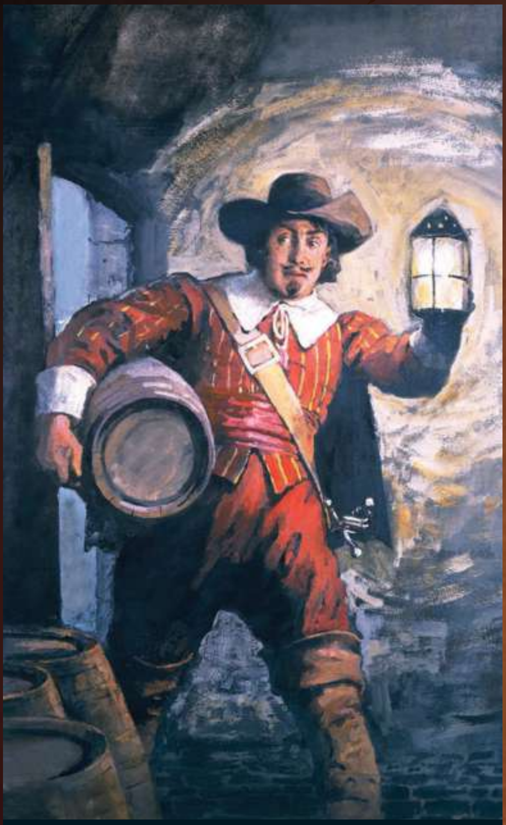
At around the same time, Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*, all plays warning against unjust and persecuting rule, which many



A depiction of Macbeth from William Shakespeare's play of the same name

on my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great

> “Their plan was to blow the building sky high, taking parliamentarians and King James I with it”



The Gunpowder Plot was a politically and religiously charged conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament

Catholics felt James I was guilty of. “My own theory is that Shakespeare, though not an outright rebel, used his increasingly privileged position to address the court and the crown, both Elizabeth, and James, on the issue of religious toleration”, Asquith asserts. “He protested against the persecution and injustice perpetrated in the name of the monarch, and pleaded for religious toleration.”

Such an assessment revises the prevailing thinking that Shakespeare wrote universal plays and avoided any topicality. Some literary scholars remain hostile to the idea that the playwright was involved in the volatile religious issues of the day, but could he really have ignored what was going on around him? It’s plausible that he wanted to do more than merely shake the literary world; he wanted to influence politics and religion, to affect his society.

When he sat at his desk, overlooking the squalid, filthy conditions of London, William Shakespeare may have been looking out at a more enlightened nation than ever before, but is was still a city and a country where the screams of religious and political prisoners filled the corridors of cramped jail cells as torturers extracted forced confessions. This sobering reality was a stark reminder of the perils of religious divisions that continued throughout Shakespeare’s life. Was it a society that he rebelled against in his own way? The final and definitive answer to that, like some of the great man’s work, is unfortunately lost to the ages.

SHAKESPEAREAN THEORIES

He didn’t really write the works

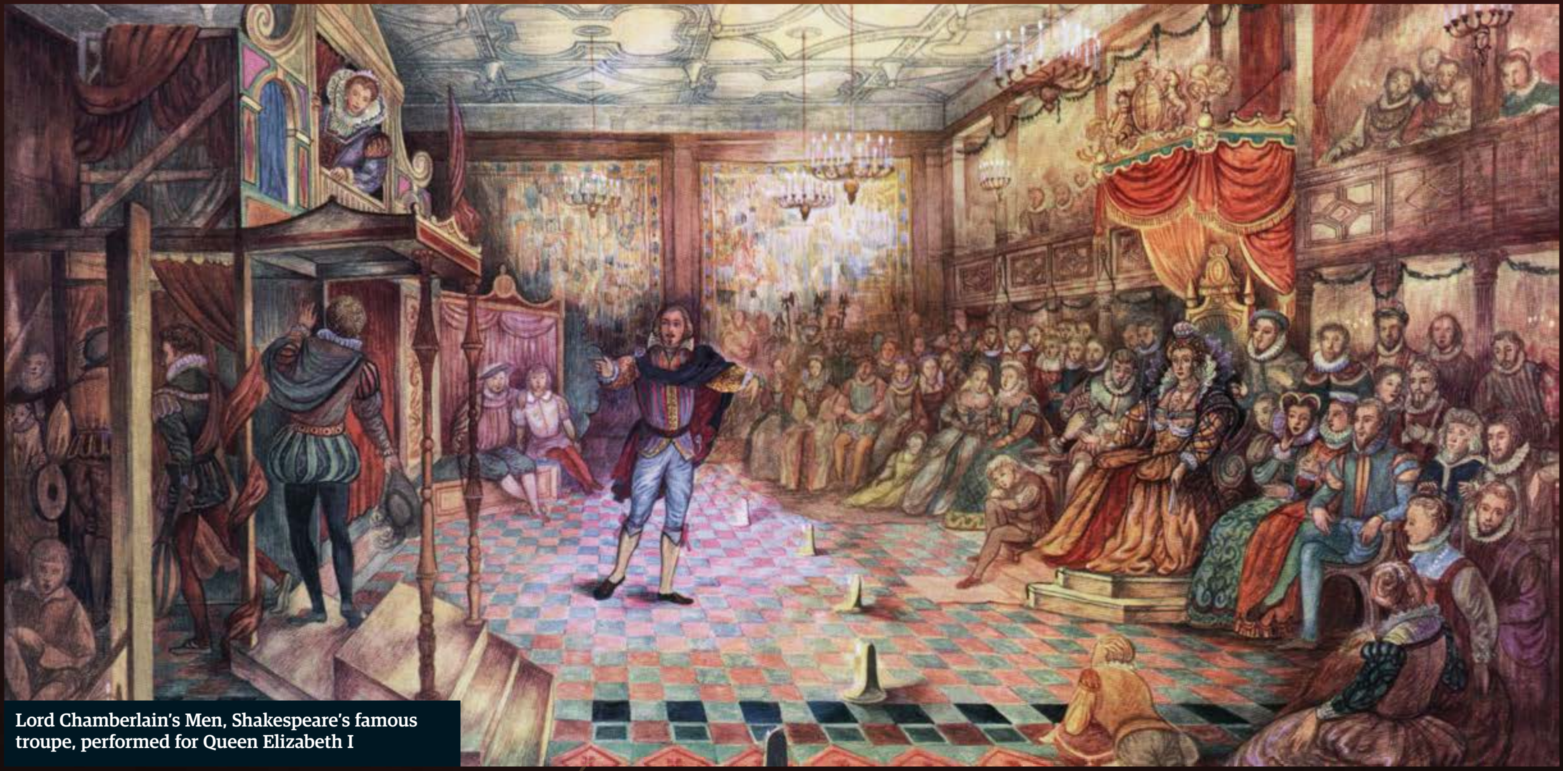
The authorship of Shakespeare’s work has been the subject of debate for decades. With no original manuscripts, no mention of him even being a writer in his will and a command of Latin, Greek and other languages that would belie his apparent poor education, many believe that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford was the writer rather than the small-town boy from Stratford. And if not him, then one of 80 other historical figures that have been mentioned over the years, such as Marlowe.

He didn’t even exist

Some scholars believe that the Shakespeare revered today as a playwright was actually a fictional character. They believe that the few documents relating to him were actually for a man called William Shaxper or Shakspere who was born in 1564, married and had children but became an actor and remained in such a role until his retirement. Certainly, Shakespeare’s death appears to have been unmarked. Had Shakespeare been such a prominent playwright, there would surely have been many documents mourning his passing, critics say.

He was an Italian

Those who argue Shakespeare was not quite who he claims he was are called anti-Stratfordians. One of their theories is that Shakespeare – or Michaelangelo Florio Crollalanza – had moved from Sicily to London, fearing the Holy Inquisition. The family name of Crollalanza was translated and became Shakespeare. Sicilian professor Martini Iuvara claims to have proof and mentions the Sicilian play *Tanto Traffico Per Niente* written by Crollalanza. It can, he claims, be translated into *Much Ado About Nothing*.



Lord Chamberlain’s Men, Shakespeare’s famous troupe, performed for Queen Elizabeth I

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